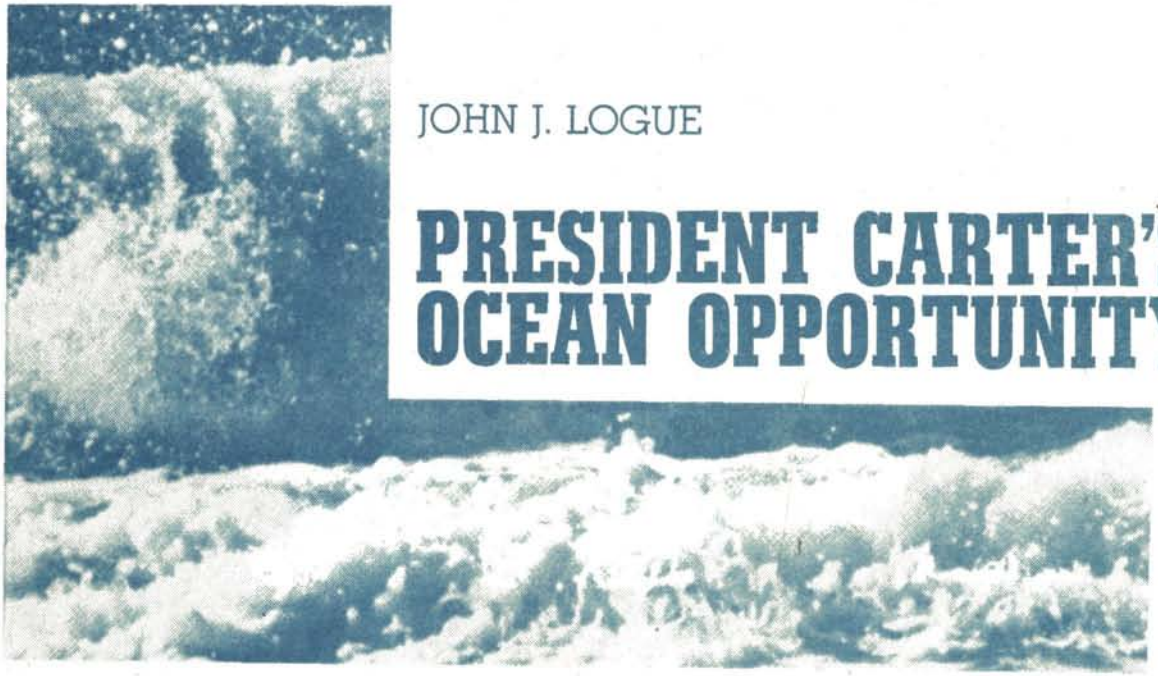
Vol. CIV No. 9 April 29, 1977 75 cents

commonweal



JOHN J. LOGUE

PRESIDENT CARTER'S OCEAN OPPORTUNITY

SECOND CALL TO ACTION
JAMES FINN

THE CATHOLIC VOTE IN FRANCE
ALAIN WOODROW

MIDDLE EAST REALITIES
FRANK GETLEIN

THE ROAD TO TEL AVIV
THOMAS POWERS

GREAT BRITAIN'S GLOOM
BRIAN WICK

ALSO: COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR
JOHN L. McKENZIE, GORDO
DE FEO, GERARD S. SLOYAN, JOHN BROSKI,
GEORGE G. HIGGINS
THE CATHOLIC PRESS: an exchange of views

AG-24003 12-75 12-76 12-77
St. Charles Sem. Libr.
Carthagena Sta.
Celina, Oh. 45822

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEWS & VIEWS

Newsless Wonders

Msgr. Salvatore Adamo's remarks about the newsless wonders of the Catholic Press [*Commonweal*, 3/18/77] upset a number of diocesan editors. The fact that he was more accurate than unfair is pointed up in a survey made since by Don Zirkel of the *Brooklyn Tablet*.

Zirkel checked 50 diocesan papers to see how they had handled the "demure" nationwide prayer vigil-demonstration conducted Feb. 27 by women in reaction to the earlier Vatican declaration barring ordination for females.

"It was the first time in the 2000-year history of the Church that such a large number of women rejected a decision about them by the exclusively-male decision-making process," observed Zirkel.

Obviously the protest was "news." However, of the 50 papers studied, only 17 printed the story, and some buried it so deep that it was difficult to find. In Boston, for instance, the story appeared on page 13; in Chicago, on page 23.

Papers of four major archdioceses—Los Angeles, Philadelphia, New York and Washington—did not mention the news. Three papers which did not run news reports on the protest did allow it to be mentioned in letters to the editor; all the letters were negative.

Zirkel cited the coverage as a sad sample of how the dog-bites-man principle works in the Catholic Press: "If a bishop says Yes to a declaration from Rome, that's news, no matter how often it happens. But if a thousand women publicly say No, that is not news."

The paradox did not escape Zirkel that several diocesan papers which did not mention the non-ordination of women were imparting significant information about the non-ordination of men.

Syracuse, as an example, was announcing that no priests would be ordained there in 1979, the first year in 50 that this will have been the case. Similarly, Rockville Centre was ruminating on the fact that while it ordained five priests in 1976, it lost 29 through retirement, sickness, leaves of absence and death. And in Superior, Wis., the diocesan paper was reporting that, compared to 1961, the diocese had nine additional parishes without resident pastors, six more closed missions, 26 percent fewer priests, 56 percent fewer priests under age 35, and 89 percent fewer seminarians (down from 101 to 11). No one will be ordained there in the next two years.

Implicit in Zirkel's survey is the idea that the ordination of women, if not a matter of theological justice to half the human race, is one of survival for the Church as institution.

In any case, he concludes, in not presenting a faithful mirror of what is happening, "ostrich editors and publishers who are not part of the solution will continue to be part of a very troubling problem."

'Habits Habits'

There is considerable upset, particularly among sisters' groups, over the film *Nasty Habits*. They've succeeded in getting major newspapers to run less offensive advertising. But where to from there without getting into an old Legion of Decency-type censorship hassle? One nun suggests the courts, on what amounts to a class-action libel suit seeking damages for sisters' having been made "the butt of ridicule."

Sister Ann Gillen, SHJC, of the executive board of the National Coalition of American Nuns, is urging religious congregations of women in the U.S. to join in a legal action against the film's producers, the ad agencies and movie reviewer Rex Reed.

(Reed wrote that "the Catholic Church has gone up in smoke over *Nasty Habits*, . . . but in the light of daily headlines, we all know nuns are doing all sorts of unsavory things in real life, so the protest seems a bit unjustified.")

Sister Gillen suggests that each congregation of nuns sue for $100,000 or more, with the total settlement sum being used to "finance charitable works for women across the nation," particularly "abused" women.

Their legal grounds would be the "incalculable damage [done] to the image of credibility of religious women, a value which is the result of centuries of sacrifice and service."

What's the legitimacy of the sisters' complaint? Maybe non-moviegoers like myself can get an idea from the comments of one hard-nosed movie reviewer:

"[In *Nasty Habits*] convent life is turned into an ugly, unfunny travesty. . . . Yet what is particularly offensive is the transposition of the Nixon gang into a Roman Catholic convent. What is the relevance, desirability, or justification for this? One reason, I suppose, is that Catholics lack the vigilante organizations that other minorities —blacks, Jews, women—so vociferously enjoy. And if you are prejudiced, vulgar, infantile, or stupid enough, you can always get a cheap laugh out of nuns using four-letter words, tumbling in the hay with priests, or even just munching a pizza on a bus. And judging by the less than steady but more than sporadic laughter I heard at the screening I attended, there may be a sufficiency of such prejudiced, vulgar, infantile, or stupid people to constitute an audience for this muck. . . . Can you imagine what would happen if Hasidic Jews, for instance, or Black Muslims were represented on screen in this manner? But nuns are a safe target."

The reviewer?

John Simon in the March 28 *New York* magazine.

Philbin's Folly

As if Northern Ireland didn't have enough problems, Bishop William Philbin of Down and Connor continues to heap coals on the fires of religious tentsion. This time he's denying Confirmation to Catholic children attending state schools.

Philbin, who opposes "integrated education," says the children aren't properly prepared for it. The parents see the action as another demonstration of Philbin's feudal concepts of how a Church is to be run, and so picketed Philbin recently when he was in Nowtownards for a confirmation ceremony.

Philbin was in the news 1975 for giving his priests instructions on how to vote in school-committee elections.

Odds and Ends

— If the American bishops approve Communion-in-the-hand at their May meeting, it's going to be over the energies of Cardinal John Carberry of St. Louis. He's taken his campaign to forestall the practice in the U.S. to the right-wing Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation, asking prayers there that the bishops will vote down the anticipated Communion-in-the-hand motion. More than 40 national hierarchies have already approved the practice.

— Some stories have happy endings. Aberdeen, Scotland, got a new bishop the other day. One of his first actions was to lift the ban imposed on Father Adrian Hastings by the interim vicar [News & Views, 4/15/77]. Bishop Mario Conti wrote Hastings: "I know of no good reason why priests of your evident integrity should not be made welcome . . . ."

JOHN DEEDY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

Sorensen Dissent

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: I am an admirer of Frank Getlein's "Washington Report," but I wish to enter a dissent to his article on March 4 insofar as he comments on Theodore Sorensen. He was far more than a classy speechwriter for John F. Kennedy. He was President Kennedy's closest adviser on a wide range of domestic and foreign policy issues. It is ironic that Mr. Getlein should weigh down Mr. Sorensen's public record with Vietnam, Cambodia, the Bay of Pigs, Chile and the fall of Dr. Allende. It was only *after* the Bay of Pigs proved a fiasco that Kennedy asked Sorensen to involve himself in foreign as well as domestic issues. Sorensen, of course, had nothing to do

(*Continued on page 287*)

JOHN BRUBAKER—R.I.P.

We mourn the loss of John Brubaker, our colleague and friend, our Advertising Manager for 40 years, who died suddenly but peacefully at home with his family on Wednesday in Holy Week.

He made an indispensable contribution to *Commonweal*'s effort to keep alive one voice of the layman and the relationship between religion and social justice in the Church. John had many human gifts: great personal warmth and charm; a joy for life; broad intellectual and cultural interests; a love of literature and music—particularly Mozart and Beethoven; and real enthusiasm for his profession.

Above all he loved and was loved by his family—his wife Mary, his four children and 12 grandchildren—and his friends. He was part of our own family spirit; and in this way he will stay with us always.

NEWS & VIEWS: 258 **CORRESPONDENCE: 259**
EDITORIAL: 259
WASHINGTON REPORT: Middle East Realities: *Frank Getlein* **260**
CATHOLIC VOTE IN FRANCE: *Alain Woodrow* **261**
GLOOMY SPRING: *Brian Wicker* **263**
CARTER'S OCEAN OPPORTUNITY: *John J. Logue* **265**
SECOND CALL TO ACTION: *James Finn* **269**
THE CATHOLIC PRESS: An Exchange of Views 273
VERSE: *Roy Scheele* **264**; *Joyce Horner* **272**; *Philip K. Jason* **278**
PRESS: The Road to Tel Aviv: *Thomas Powers* **275**
THE SCREEN: *Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.* **277**
THE KINGDOM AND THE PAPACY: *John L. McKenzie* **280**
BOOKS: *Gordon Burnside, Ronald De Feo, Gerard S. Sloyan, John Druska, George G. Higgins* **281**
THE HOLOCAUST AS MEASURE: *John Garvey* **282**

JAMES O'GARA: *Editor* JOHN DEEDY: *Managing Editor*
RAYMOND A. SCHROTH: *Associate Editor* ANNE M. ROBERTSON, *Editorial Assistant*
COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.: *Movies* JOHN FANDEL: *Poetry*
FRANK GETLEIN: *Washington*
BRIAN WICKER: *Great Britain* ALAIN WOODROW: *Paris*
HENRY TEN KORTENAAR: *Rome* DESMOND FISHER: *Dublin*
EDWARD S. SKILLIN: *Publisher*
Staff: LINDA F. KAYLER, PAMELA J. FITZGERALD, HARRIETTE BALSKY

COMMONWEAL
A review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts. Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. Printed in the USA and published bi-weekly by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016; telephone: (212) MU 3-2042. Copyright © 1977 Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.—US and Canada: $17 a year. Foreign $19. Single copies 75c. Special two-year rate $29.50. Foreign $33.50.

Commonweal is Indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Catholic Periodical Index, and Book Review Digest. Microfilms from Vol. 1, 1924, to date available through University Microfilms; 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. National Serials Data Program No.: ISSN 0010-3330.

HUMAN RIGHTS

By elevating human rights to international political concern, and therefore involving foreign policy, President Carter reverses the coin of moral witness from its religious to its secular side, and in the process raises the thought whether political leaders can routinely do what religious leaders are expected to do by their calling. Small wonder. In its developing contexts, the witness to human rights has seldom ever been one-dimensional. Overlap into the political order, to mention no other, is almost inevitable, with consequences that sometimes can be drastic. Religious leaders learn this anew in Uganda, the Congo, Rhodesia and other countries, some to great pain, some at the expense of life itself. The difference when moral witness on human rights is translated by political leaders to political levels is that mere words can become as threatening to the fabric of peace and stability as the most violent negative reactions of regimes to the positive witness of clergy. President Carter discovers this with the problems to détente brought on by his pointing up of human rights conditions in the USSR. Inevitably the question must be asked whether, on the political level, the witness justifies the consequences. The answer has to be ambivalent.

Of course, universal human rights are a legitimate, vital concern of the nations of the world. This is, in fact, a principle upon which the United Nations rests, and one to which countries attest by their UN memberships. However, for several reasons, including inherent weaknesses in the world body, concern for human rights cannot be left there, as if UN membership satisfied all obligations to see justice done in the world. There have to be other efforts on behalf of human rights, and direct dealings between nations provide an obvious avenue for expressing one's concern. The issue then becomes one of means and ends. Concern for human rights must be more than preachment, and, if only to escape cynicism, there must be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

realistic hope that change tor the better is within the reach of words.

Some would debate that this practicality obtained in the Carter-USSR instance, if for no other reason than the different meanings human rights have in the two societies. Still, we were happy to see Mr. Carter put the USSR on the spot. Quite obviously, as it turned out, the Carter human rights challenges to the USSR did not undercut the SALT talks as much as Russian leaders at one point wanted the world to believe they did; the SALT negotiations were in troubles of their own. And though the human rights challenges achieved no immediately positive results, they did serve to let Russian leaders, and much of the world, know that the new administration in Washington looks with jaundiced eye on human rights conditions in the USSR, whatever the definitions involved.

Mr. Carter made his points well. But perhaps now it is time to turn in other directions, where there can be more pragmatic hope for effecting concrete results—specifically to conditions at home, and in allied and client states. It is also perhaps time to place U.S. emphases on deeds rather than words. There is a vast difference between true morality and easy moralizing, and, so soon after Vietnam, the U.S. is advised to shun all semblances of hypocrisy. It can best do this by letting its conduct do the speaking for a while on the many broad issues of justice crying for attention.

WASHINGTON REPORT

MIDDLE EAST REALITIES

Anwar Sadat of Egypt has come and gone, leaving in his wake the familiar speculations about how this country can "settle" the Arab-Israeli conflict now rapidly approaching the 29th anniversary of its formal existence. In his prior suggestions, President Carter managed to go in opposite directions at once, which is probably the only sensible way for an outsider to approach the problem: on the one hand, the borders prior to the Six-Day War would be reestablished; on the other, Israel would have defensible position beyond those borders. The scheme was denounced by one and all but it did show an immediate grasp of at least the psychological realities of the Middle East: the Arabs, having repeatedly taken the sword and perished by the sword, want at least the outward and visible signs of their folly erased; the filled-out borders of Israel are those signs. For their part, the Israelis, having fought a whole series of wars just to remain in existence, do not want to yield the territories they took from the aggressors and from which the aggressors in the past launched their various invasions. Carter's double-edged suggestions addressed itself precisely to those apparently mutually contradictory desires and was an ingenious attempt to keep both in balance.

It is conceivable that some such "settlement" may eventually come into being. It can only be brought into being, however, by the primary parties concerned and probably only surreptitiously, without a great deal of public reference by anyone. What is much more likely is that things will go on pretty much as they are for some years to come, with or without an occasional Arab invasion of Israel followed by a successful defense by Israel and some adjustment of the borders, probably minor, in favor of the successful defender. The line of the Canal and the Red Sea, for instance, are more obviously defensible—discernible, for that matter—than the present lines in the Sinai passes hit upon by negotiation following the Yom Kippur War. If the Egyptians again invade Israel, they can reasonably expect the new line to be back at the Canal-Red Sea, if not indeed the outskirts of Cairo. This consideration more than any other is presumably responsible for the quiet on the Sinai front. But assuredly, if another invasion occurs and is successfully repulsed and pushed back, not even Henry Kissinger resurrected from the political limbo he now gibbers in could induce the Israelis to do an encore on the Yom Kippur withdrawal. (Incidentally, the most interesting news about the Catfish Hunter of the Golden Age Club is that he is neither news nor interesting: a few weeks ago, the diplomatic advisor to Georgetown University led it be known that he would be walking on the campus at a certain time on a certain day, an ideal opportunity for diplomatic correspondents to get up to date on the true significance of all that has transpired since Henry himself transpired to the spires of Georgetown:nobody came.)

Those being the conditions that prevail, not a great deal is going to happen in the Middle East, barring some suicidal attack by Syria, an attack no less unlikely than one by Egypt through the passes, since this time the attack would have to be *up to* the Golan Heights instead of the traditional launch *down from* those eminences. Gravity's working the other way. And the fact that gravity is working the other way is why the Israelis will not hand back what they took from the invaders so the invaders can try the game again. Would the invaders try the game again? Hard to say, but certainly, given the record, no Israeli government can do the handback number and expect to remain in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

office very long; therefore, no Israeli government will do the handback number.

The original borders of Israel were ordained by the United Nations in 1947. They were more or less fixed by the cease-fire lines of the 1948-49 war, the Israelis having successfully held the invading Arab armies to those lines. Those borders, which could have been between Israel and a Palestinian state were, in fact, between Israel and the surrounding Arab states, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. The borders remained that way until the Six-Day War in 1967. Thus, when people talk about the historic borders that must be returned to, they are talking about borders that existed for eight years, as compared to the present actual borders which, give a little take a little here and there, have existed for ten. Thus, when Sadat and others talk about an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, they are talking about an independent Palestinian state that was fully within the power of Jordan and Egypt to create all by themselves anytime they wanted to between 1949 and 1967; for that matter, those states and the other Arab states could very easily have helped to establish an independent Palestinian state on pretty much the territory now spoken of between the UN Partition Mandate and Israel's declaration of existence, the end of November, 1947 to the middle of May, 1948.

Thus for a period of almost ten years, the Arab states could have peacefully established an independent Palestinian state. That they did not suggests powerfully that the existence of such a state was never the be-all and end-all of Arab policy it is now purported to be. On the contrary, the absence of such establishment, indeed of any smallest gesture toward such establishment, by the Arab states then in control of those parts of what had been British Palestine, suggests that had the Arab states succeeded in 1948-49 in their avowed aim of driving the Jews into the sea, the states themselves—Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq—would simply have divided the spoils, more or less amicably, and allowed the Palestinians to continue living under foreign occupation as they had from time immemorial: Ottoman Turks, Brits, Byzantines, Romans, Greeks, Babylonians, even the Crusaders from time to time.

The awful truth is that history is made largely by force and it is not repealed by the wishes of those whose efforts to make it by force have failed. This is true of the Middle East no less than of Middle Europe, where Germany, having lost at force lost, too, whole states and principalities taken by the victims as insurance against future German attacks.

Ultimately, of course, history is made by other things, too, especially the energy and ingenuity nations bring to the eternal task of feeding and housing themselves, extending what help they can to less fortunate neighbors. It is in this aspect of history that the tragedy of the Arab assaults on Israel comes into the highest relief. The domestic economy of Israel has presented, from the first, indeed for some generations prior to the formal foundation of the state, the first signs of hope for self-sufficiency in a region dismal and doomed by centuries of misery accepted with a perhaps edifying resignation to the will of God, but with no evident will to take action against misery, to ameliorate, to raise up, to improve. The Israelis did all those things. The Zionists for generations before the state of Israel brought scientific agriculture, the foundation of any society, to the region that had invented it in the first place and then forgotten it. The Zionists-Israelis could have been, should have been and may yet be, the best hope for a region in which malnutrition, infant death, disease and misery have been built in for centuries. They really have made the desert bloom, and the Middle East has an awful lot of desert that needs to bloom if the people are ever to live productive, rewarding lives.

As against that possibility, the Arab states set out to destroy that sign of hope and have gone on for three decades now trying to destroy what they ought to emulate, take lessons from. The best thing about Sadat's recent visit was that, in addition to asking for the arms he had to ask for—and, it is much to be hoped, will not get—he also asked for economic assistance.

FRANK GETLEIN

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

CATHOLIC VOTE IN FRANCE

The French electorate has shown, without a shadow of a doubt, that it is ready to flirt with "collectivism" rather than celebrate its golden wedding with immobilism. The second ballot of the municipal elections, held on March 20th, confirmed the sweeping victory of the combined Socialist and Communist forces. The gains were impressive, for the Left now controls 158 of the 221 towns with a population of over 30,000 inhabitants, wresting 55 from the hands of majority.

Not only did the governing coalition lose seven major cities with a population of over 100,000 to the opposition (Saint-Etienne, Montpellier, Rennes, Nantes, Le

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mans, Villeurbanne and Turcoing, which already held Lille, Marseilles, Aix-en-Provence and Grenoble), and only retained the ten following: Paris, Lyons, Nice, Toulouse, Toulon, Metz, Nancy, Orleans, Perpignan and Mulhouse, but, more humiliating still, seven members of the government were beaten, most of whom are staunch supporters of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

The coalition of the Left—Socialists, Communists and left-wing radicals—exercised great discipline, on the second ballot, with regard to the choice and support of the best-placed candidates—to the advantage of the Communists who now govern 72 municipal councils as against 79 for the Socialists—whereas the warring factions within the majority—the "Rassemblement pour la République" (R.P.R.) led by Jacques Chirac and the various groups supporting Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's Independent Republicans—continued their bitter feuds, which cost them many a vote, except in Paris.

As most commentators pointed out, the two main winners of the contest were Jacques Chirac, who will become the first mayor of the capital for a century, and the united forces of the Left, who now control seven out of ten of the major towns throughout the country. The increased polarization resulting from the elections, which have accentuated the division of the country into two blocs—51 percent of the votes went to the Left, 47 percent to the majority —has led to the virtual eclipse of the centrist forces. The followers of such moderates as Jean Lecanuet or Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber have largely abandoned their leaders in favor of the Left. This greatly weakens President Giscard's position, summed up by his slogan: "*La France sera gouvernée au centre*" (France will be governed from the center).

The Left would be foolish, however, to count its chickens before they are hatched. If it is true that these municipal elections are, to a certain extent, a trial run for the legislative elections to be held next year, it is also true—as the majority in power never tires of pointing out—that the French were not voting for a change of society, this time. When it comes to parliamentary as opposed to local elections, the uncommitted middle-of-the-roaders—many of whom voted for the Left mainly to voice their displeasure at the way the country is being run at present—will think twice before taking the plunge into the unknown. In the 1971 municipal elections, for example, the contender for the mayorship of Clermont Ferrand was soundly beaten. This did not seem to mar his future career, however, for he was none other than Valéry Giscard d'Estaing!

Reasons are not lacking to explain the majority's defeat: the wear and tear of a party continually in power for the last twenty years; the right-wing opposition, within the government, to the President's reforming zeal; dissatisfaction with the belated attempts to come to grips with the economic crisis, inflation and unemployment; the rejection of the "Plan Barre," the Prime Minister's austerity program, etc.

But the main tactical error made by the parties in power, apart from their divisive internecine strife, was to underestimate the strength and unity of the Left. In spite of inevitable tensions and rivalry between Socialists and Communists, their "common program of government" has found increasing favor with the electorate, their alliance, unique in Europe, has grown steadily stronger with give-and-take on both sides and, above all, the Communist bogey no longer frightens anyone—especially since the de-Stalinization process adopted by the French Communist Party at its last congress, triggered off by the dropping of the sacrosanct dogma of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the shaping of a new doctrine of 'Eurocommunism," independent of Moscow.

Another factor that should be taken into account when assessing the victory of the Left is the contribution of the Catholic vote. One is struck by the important gains made by the Left in traditionally Catholic areas, like the East and especially the West (Normandy and Brittany, for example, where the opposition won such towns as Alençon, Rennes, Angers, Nantes, Brest, Saint Malo and Cherbourg, plus 27 towns of less than 30,000 inhabitants).

Historically, Catholics have always voted to the Right. For over a century, France has offered two contradictory images of herself: one, right-wing and Catholic, the other, left-wing and lay. The dichotomy is partly the product of the bourgeois anti-clericalism and socialist free-thinking of the last century, but since 1936, hands have been proffered to Christians from the Left, with a growing measure of success. Last June, Georges Marchais, General Secretary of the French Communist Party, launched a solemn appeal to the Christians of France to collaborate more closely with the Communists in the building of a more just society. Generally speaking, the marked swing towards the Left, observed among Christians, both clerical and lay, has meant that the "Catholic vote" has increasingly aroused the desires of the left-wing parties.

It is not easy, however, to assess the Catholic vote, not because they refuse to stand up and be counted, but because the definition of who is a Catholic or not is no longer clearly defined; even the old standby of the statistics of religious practice is no longer a meaningful guide.

The spectacular swing to the Left in the recent elections of such Catholic strongholds as the West country and, to a lesser extent, Alsace and Lorraine shows clearly that Christians are not only abandoning their traditional suspicion of politics—up until now they preferred social to political commitment—but they are no longer afraid to vote Socialist, or even Communist.

This new political awareness is the fruit of a lengthy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

process: left-wing Catholics have come a long way from the social Catholicism preached by *Rerum Novarum*. Their itinerary often began in the various Catholic Action movements and in the leftist C.F.D.T. trades union, which was Christian in origin, and which has served as an alternative to a strictly political commitment.

An extremist minority of these Catholics have espoused the marxist cause to the extent of joining the Communist Party or one of the many fringe groups of Maoists, Trotskyites, or "Christian-Marxists," who are trying, without much success, to drew up a common platform from which to launch a French branch of the international movement "Christians for Socialism." But the majority of leftist Christians have gone to swell the ranks of the Socialist Party—encouraged by the famous declaration of the bishops in 1972, "For a Christian approach to politics," on the legitimacy of political pluralism and on the need for Catholics to square their political ideals with the Gospel, which, declared the bishops, "is not neutral."

Their specific contribution to the French political scene is probably the creation of a Christian and humanist current within the mainstream of Socialism that provides a viable alternative to the rigid marxist dogmatism put forward by the Communist Party. This tradition stems partly from the utopian heritage of Proudhon, enriched by the contributions of such theologians and thinkers as Emmanuel Mounier and Jürgen Moltmann.

It is to be doubted, however, whether the new Christian Left will succeed in persuading the mass of apathetic Catholics, still largely conservative, to follow its dynamic example. Especially since it tends to despise the existing political structures and to reject "popular religion" as a form of class collaboration.

If the middle-class Catholics, who form an important component of the electorate, do not follow these committed left-wing Christians, then the latter's impact will be negligible. But to judge by the results of the municipal elections, more and more disgruntled middle-of-the-road voters, including Christians, are being seduced by the Socialist sirens. The real test will come next year, with the parliamentary elections and the choice of a next National Assembly. And the Catholic vote will count.

ALAIN WOODROW

(*Alain Woodrow is* Commonweal*'s regular correspondent in France.*)

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

FROM BRITAIN

GLOOMY SPRING

Everyone knows that the British economy is in a fairly bad way: but I think that just now (I write this in Lent, so it seems appropriate to say something gloomy) we are in for a pretty big crisis. I don't mean anything terribly dramatic: but merely that there is a *combination* of problems either with us or about to hit us which, taken together amount to a major turning point of British capitalism.

The essential question is whether it is possible to "manage" a mixed economy in a society which has inherited the sorts of difficulty that Britain faces. Consider some of the current issues. (I don't pretend to give them in any order except as they come into my head as I write.) There is a very important strike at British Leyland—the country's biggest motor manufacturer, and biggest earner of export earnings—which is very far from being just another of those "wildcat" affairs we used to be told about so much. The strikers are the firm's toolmakers: among the most highly skilled, but also the most "co-operative" and trouble-free sections of the workforce. They haven't been in a serious dispute for years and their grouse now is very simple. Under the present policy of strictly controlling incomes, they aren't getting paid any more for their skills (and the years of training undergone to acquire them) than many of their unskilled colleagues: and they are clearly determined at the present time to get that situation changed. But the government says (roughly) that nothing can be done because the income policy prevents it. Even the leaders of their own union are against them: but they are unabashed. As I write, they have decided to go on with their strike. And clearly they have a case; not only in justice, but also in common sense: they are the sort of people the country depends on to make the kinds of thing Britain has to make to live.

Another highly significant development is the current pressure by the police for better pay. Their incomes too have gone down (in relation to costs) because of the incomes policy. Garbage collectors are better paid now than they are, largely because the police were caught by bad luck when the pay policy first came in. The most significant thing about this problem is that police are now campaigning for the right to strike in support of their demands: which is to say, they want a change in the law.

These examples are just two out of many which reveal the weaknesses of trying to control incomes by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a strict and blanket limit on everybody's rise in earnings. But the government is absolutely insistent that there must be yet another year at least, in which the pay policy continues. Without this, they say, there is no hope of controlling inflation. But they will not have an easy time of it, especially since price rises in January went up by an exceptionally large amount. This is why it has been necessary for the government to tighten up its control of prices. Without giving evidence of a willingness to control price rises, it has no hope of getting a renewal of the pay policy when it comes up for renewal in the summer. But even the new policy on price rises just announced will not be enough: for—as Mr. Hattersley, the price minister admitted—even the new controls cannot do much by themselves to stop price-rises, and hence demands for corresponding wage-rises. This is why it is virtually inevitable that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will have to make big tax cuts in the budget in early spring. Only by a combination of tax cuts and price controls (and perhaps some import controls too) can the government have any hope of swinging things in its favor and preventing a breaking of trade union ranks on a catastrophic scale.

But as soon as the government faces up to one reality—namely the need to give something to the wage-earners and especially the wage-earners with skill or responsibility—it falls foul of another; namely the hostility of business to any sort of tightening of the price-control system. The businessmen say, with some justification, that price controls don't work where they are supposed to, but do have damaging effects where they should not. In other words, the policy of tighter price controls, however necessary politically, makes economic nonsense. But as soon as you say that, in criticism of government irrationality or cowardice, you are faced with another example of the same thing on the other side. Thus, if Tony Crosland was right in his last important contribution to Labor party economic strategy, the cuts in public expenditure demanded by the business community (and the IMF bosses) as a condition of getting the big IMF loan at the end of last year were similarly irrational: that is to say, they made no economic sense, however necessary it was politically to make them.

The crisis of British capitalism, then, is one in which economic realities and political realities seem to be drifting apart. The tendency of most parties to the debate, when such a situation arises, is to say that one or other of these "realities" is not a reality at all. Thus, the Confederation of British Industry, representing business, has tended to say (and still says) that the tightening up of price controls is simply an unwarranted "capitulation" to trade union pressure. Similarly, the trade unions tend to say that refusal to concede price (or import) controls is simply a device of businessmen who want to keep up profits. But the government's job is surely to face the awkward fact that both kinds of pressure—economic and political—are real.

It would be tempting to think that in such a situation the extension of participation in decision-making within industry is the only long-term answer. There have long been those (including many proponents of that curious body of thought known among Catholics as the Church's "social teaching"—as though there were any other!) who have diagnosed the basic ills of industrial capitalism in terms of lack of involvement in decision-making at the level of the firm or industry. The recent arrival on people's desks of copies of the "Bullock Report" might have been calculated to warm the cockles of such people's hearts, for it suggests far-reaching legal and other reforms to ensure the presence of workers on company boards of directors, through elections conducted by trade union machinery. But after a few days of rejoicing, and some mildly enthusiastic noises from the unions themselves, the government seems to have decided to scrap any plans it might have had to implement that report. Like so many others before it, it seems destined to gather dust on some bureaucrat's shelf for many years to come. And this is not because it is a piece of nonsense. Nothing which gained the concerted hostility of industrialists to the extent that the Bullock Report did could be totally lacking in good ideas. But the point is that it does not address itself to the questions that most bother people: for all its fundamental idealism, worker participation has little to say to the immediate question of prices and wages.

Neither, of course, does the other current political "hot potato"—"devolution." That is why, in the short term, the defeat of the government's devolution plans is only a set-back, not a rout. Like the Bullock concept of extending participation in industry, the "nationalist" concept of widening participation through some form of self-determination for Wales and Scotland is basically a means for "managing" a situation which is beginning to look unmanageable on any other terms. If either comes to pass, it will be more for political than economic reasons. The economic problems will remain.

BRIAN WICKER

(Brian Wicker is Commonweal's *regular correspondent in Great Britain.)*

ROY SCHEELE

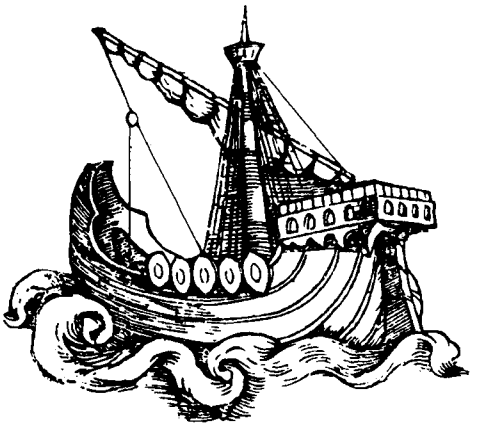
THE DAY TRIP

Among other things
forgive me, Muses, for this:
while on Parnassus
we missed the spring.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CARTER'S OCEAN OPPORTUNITY

JOHN J. LOGUE



Needed: A fresh and searching look at a crisis situation

As President Carter gets into his presidency there is intense speculation as to the specific foreign policies he will pursue: in the Middle East, on the limitation of strategic arms, in Southern Africa, on nuclear proliferation, to name just a few policy areas. But in one important policy area, law of the sea, there is almost no public discussion. Yet in that area there are the ingredients for a spectacular success—and an equally spectacular failure. And what Jimmy Carter does or does not do on law of the sea will have more influence than the actions of any other individual.

One hopes that our new President will see that, properly approached, law of the sea policy can become a—perhaps *the*—major catalyst for peace and economic and social justice. Although the hour is very late, a major Carter initiative in this policy area could be a turning point in international politics, making a major contribution to the solution of problems of peace, development, arms control and protection of the human environment. And revenues from the trillions of dollars of seabed minerals can and should be an important source of assistance in each of these problem areas.

What is needed most is a fresh and searching look at the great ocean crisis the world faces and the opportunities as well as the dangers inherent in that crisis. Carter's choice of Elliot Richardson, an early ocean internationalist, to head up the U.S. law of the sea delegation suggests that that kind of reappraisal may be in the works. And as we Americans "think anew" our ocean policies we should encourage all countries—and especially Third World countries—to do the same.

The ocean question came to center stage in the fall of 1967 with the famous speech of Ambassador Arvid Pardo of Malta in the UN General Assembly. In that four-hour address he stressed the great dangers and great opportunities inherent in the ocean question. As a direct result of his speech, the Assembly established a Seabed Committee which spent six years trying to come to grips with the complexities of the law of the sea. In late 1973 that Committee gave way to the 154-nation United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. For three years, in five sessions, that giant Conference has been dealing with the whole range of ocean questions, e.g., navigation, pollution, title to fish and minerals, armaments, etc. A sixth working session is scheduled to begin in New York City on May 23rd. However, recent unilateral grabs by prominent nations in the Conference have generated a mood of deep pessimism about the Conference's future. Unfortunately the United States played a major role in precipitating that wave of unilateralism.

Neither President Nixon, nor President Ford, nor Secretary Kissinger could grasp the opportunities implicit in the giant Conference, the largest diplomatic meeting in history. Because of the way they approached the Conference, i.e., privately, selectively, spasmodically, U.S. law of the sea policy has tended to be erratic and changeable, reflecting no broad vision, no unifying concept or ideal, and having almost no public interest constituency.

President Ford's decision to sign the unilateral 200-mile fishing zone bill is a perfect example of the defects in U.S. policy and policy-making. Indeed, future his-

JOHN J. LOGUE *is Director of the World Order Research Institute at Villanova University and editor of the recent book,* The Fate of the Oceans. *In January he gave six lectures on the law of the sea at the University of Nairobi.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

torians may say that April 13, 1976, marked the beginning of the end of the Law of the Sea Conference. For, under siege by Governor Reagan in the G.O.P. primaries, the President defied his State and Defense Departments and executed a 180-degree turn in U.S. policy. In the middle of a seven-week New York session of the Conference he endorsed a bill declaring that on March 1, 1977, the United States will have jurisdiction over 25 percent of all the fish in the world. (The figure is from a General Accounting Office study.)

And then our delegate returned to the Conference to urge an *international* approach to law of the sea problems!

Not surprisingly, American unilateralism triggered unilateralism in other important countries, e.g., Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, the European Economic Community and, in mid-January, in India and Sri Lanka, the home of Ambassador H. S. Amerasinghe, the President of the Law of the Sea Conference.

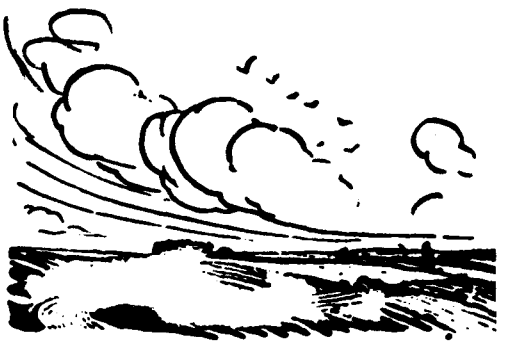
The failure of U.S. leadership had been a—perhaps *the*—major reason for the pessimism with which so many observers view the Conference. Indeed, many believe there is a good chance that this year's May-July session of the Conference will see the end of this valiant effort to reach agreement on a comprehensive law of the sea treaty. Equally likely is a "giveaway treaty" combining absolute clarity about the property rights of long coastline states to trillions of dollars of offshore mineral wealth with calculated vagueness as to all other rights—and duties. Such a treaty is a far cry from the vision of the oceans as "the common heritage of mankind," articulated so eloquently by Ambassador Pardo in his 1967 address. Indeed, it is quite possible that many states would not ratify such a giveaway treaty.

The hour is late. But there is a chance that a new U.S. approach could turn the Conference around and help, even at this late date, to move it back in the common heritage direction. But that new approach is not likely unless our policy-makers do some deep thinking about the nature of the ocean problem and ocean opportunity the world faces.

There are several "special things" about law of the sea policy, i.e., special reasons which explain why it can have a major impact—positive or negative—on international politics. One hopes that the Carter administration will quickly grasp them. The first special thing is that to be effective a law of the sea policy must take an integrated approach to ocean problems. We have not understood this. We may soon learn that if we persist in grabbing all the immensely valuable mineral resources out to 200 miles we will not be able to stop other nations from grabbing complete control over research, pollution, dispute settlement—and even navigation—in that same 200-mile zone.

Another special thing about law of the sea policy is that, if it is to be effective, it must promote "institutionalization," i.e., the development of one or more new international institutions with significant powers and jurisdictions. An international seabed authority is in prospect with real authority over the exploitation of the deep ocean. A special "intersessional" meeting on the subject will be held in Geneva in early spring.

Institution-building can make a major contribution to world order. It is the exact opposite of the virtuoso "Lone Ranger" performances so characteristic of Secretary Kissinger. The European Coal and Steel Community and the European Common Market are excellent examples of how "institutionalization" can transform problems and problem-solvers. Those two institutions have changed Western Europe from a bloody battleground into a workshop for peace and prosperity. Ocean institutions of modest powers and jurisdiction might begin to do the same thing for the world, winning



new power and responsibilities as they demonstrate their effectiveness. They could—and should—make East and West and North and South co-workers in an important common undertaking.

A third special thing about law of the sea is that it is perhaps the only area of international cooperation which can provide substantial self-generated financing, financing substantial enough to make a difference in a number of important policy areas. That financing—tapping some of the trillions of dollars of offshore mineral wealth—could make a major contribution to peace and development as well as to preserving the marine environment. But if, which seems probable, coastal states are successful in grabbing all—or almost all—the offshore oil and gas, then, as Pardo said last June, the development gap will get wider.

These special requirements of the law of the sea policy, i.e., of a wise law of the sea policy, mark it as something quite different from most other policy areas. In those areas success depends on too many external factors. Because they usually require substantial funding, programs in those areas are hard to sell, whether to the American people, to the Congress, to our allies or to the other nations in the world community. All too often the solutions are temporary, subject to changes in personalities and/or perceptions in the governments, including our own, which have negotiated

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

them. And all too often these foreign policy problems and "solutions" are approached—or seem to be approached—separately, giving the impression that they are not really related to each other. As we have indicated, ocean policy must, by its nature, take an integrated approach.

An inadequate law of the sea treaty will come apart. Indeed it may not even get the necessary number of ratifications. An adequate treaty must, by its definition, relate to and help bring order to the complex and ever-changing ocean environment and the many conflicting uses of ocean space. It will draw the nations of the world together in continuing and constructive action and dialogue not only on the complex and urgent ocean problem, but on other problems as well.

To stress the unique characteristics of law of the sea policy is not to underestimate the difficulties President Carter will have in devising proper proposals and in winning support for them in the Congress, the country and in the Law of the Sea Conference itself. The job of gaining public support will be an immense one. It is a job that the Nixon and Ford administrations did not even begin.

Though difficult, that job of winning public support is by no means impossible. The new administration should start by realizing that ocean problems have a great potential for dramatization. The tremendous interest in last summer's "Operation Sail" suggests that potential. The tall ships which sailed into New York Harbor on July 4th generated more media coverage than all five working sessions of the Law of the Sea Conference put together.

President Carter has already shown a sure instinct for dramatization. He has made the whole world interested in his tiny home town, Plains, Georgia. It would not take much effort for him to focus public attention on the seas, their problems and their opportunities. A major address at the Naval Academy, his alma mater, a White House dinner for Thor Heyerdahl, Jacques Cousteau and others concerned with the survival of the ocean, a visit to the Law of the Sea Conference, a paragraph or two in the State of the Union Address—these would suggest that the new President is deeply interested in an urgent, complex *and fascinating* problem: the fate of the oceans.

Needless to say, building interest in things nautical is not the same thing as building support for specific policies. But it helps. To develop such support, the new President should create a Presidential Commission on Law of the Sea Policy. There is little reason to doubt that he could find first-class figures from many fields to serve on it. A well-organized White House Conference on Ocean Policy could make a major contribution to developing ocean consciousness throughout American society.

In both houses of Congress and on both sides of the aisle there are ocean internationalists who fought for a sound law of the sea policy even though Gerald Ford was throwing in the towel. And there are a few public interest groups who fought the good fight even though the odds seemed hopeless. But central to everything is presidential interest, presidential initiative, presidential support, and first-quality presidential appointments.

Other Nations

What about the rest of the world? After all, there are 153 other nations in the Law of the Sea Conference and the conventional wisdom is that in that Conference an American initiative is something to oppose rather than to support.

It would be foolish to suggest that a bold law of the sea initiative by President Carter would stampede the Conference in support of his policies. However, there are a number of factors which suggest that such an initiative, if sensitively handled, would be given serious attention and might even command substantial support in the Conference. Many nations have become very disillusioned with the Conference and especially with the rhetorical phrases which have been used to justify the coming grab of "the ocean commons" by a few states, half of them already rich. The 51 nations in the "Group of Landlocked and Geographically Disadvantaged States," most of them from the Third World, are articulating the indignation of the ocean "have-nots." They refuse to believe the speakers who urge that this grab is "good for mankind," or "good for the Third World." They see—and say—that, in fact, it will widen the "development gap," not narrow it.

If Jimmy Carter makes an in-depth analysis of national positions he will find that not a few of the grabbers are schizophrenic, genuinely sorrowful that Pardo's vision of the oceans as the common heritage has been all but abandoned. They realize that the central demand of the "ocean haves," the 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ), would give the greatest proportion of ocean wealth to a few coastal states. For not only is the overwhelming proportion of exploitable mineral wealth within 200 miles of shore but most of it is off the shores of a relatively few states. The coastal bloc may not be as solid as most observers believe. Some of them—or so it appears to this observer—would respond to an appeal to the Conference to move back in the common heritage direction.

The fight over offshore resources gets less attention than the worthy— and very difficult—effort to establish institutions to regulate the exploitation of the mineral wealth of the deep ocean. There is a possibility that the coming Geneva meetings will see a reconciliation of the very different positions of the developed and developing countries. However, there is general agreement

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that deep ocean minerals will contribute very little to the common heritage. Indeed a UN study released last September says we can expect by the late 1980s only about $150,000,000 a year from deep ocean resources. This is a far cry from the *six billion dollars a year by 1975* that would have come under Pardo's plan. Of course, Pardo included offshore minerals—beyond 12 miles—in his proposal.

Most law of the sea "experts" will tell you that offshore sharing is dead and has been so since the 1974 Caracas session of the Conference. But the report of its death may prove an exaggeration. Early in 1976 a study of the Trilateral Commission suggested that wealthy states share as much as 50 percent of their 12-to-200 mile offshore mineral wealth with the international community. The Commission is made up of prominent West Europeans, Japanese, Canadians and Americans. Among the latter when the report was issued were Jimmy Carter, Walter Mondale, Cyrus Vance, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Harold Brown—the top five foreign policy-makers in the Carter administration.

Other "Trilaterals" include David Rockefeller, William Scranton and Hedley Donovan, editor-in-chief of *Time*. One cannot, of course, say that all members of the Commission are bound by each recommendation of the Ocean Report. However, one can reasonably infer that the new administration will make a searching re-examination of our sea policy.

With the Trilateral Commission's or some other kind of sharing proposal it may still be possible to turn the Conference around and put it back on the common heritage track. With the right kind of proposal it might be possible to get broad support in most parts of the world. Such a plan must fulfill four conditions. First, it must have substance, i.e., it must provide a *substantial* amount of ocean revenue. Second, it must be a light burden or no burden for most Third World countries. Third, it must be based on mineral revenue alone. And, fourth, it must award most *but not all* of the mineral resources to the coastal state.

One plan which meets all four of these specifications is the so-called *"Barba Negra* Formula" proposed last summer by a company of diplomats and private citizens who sailed an 80-year-old square-rigger some sixty miles from the United Nations out into the Atlantic. Their ingenious proposal, part of a 1200-word *"Barba Negra* Appeal," provides that a certain portion—*one to 20 percent, depending on per capita income*—of the mineral revenues within each coastal state's economic zone be given to a World Common Heritage Fund. The amount each state would contribute would be in proportion to its per capita income. The revenues from this 12 to 200-mile economic zone would be used by the World Ocean Authority to aid development, to fight pollution and—a small amount—to subsidize such UN functions as peacekeeping.

Because of its "graduated sharing" formula, such a plan should be easy for the Third World to accept and difficult for the developed world to agree to. In fact, the reverse may be true. For certain Third World states preach the "exclusive economic zone" with religious fervor. They have not yet seen that the EEZ is incompatible with any meaningful implementation of the principle of the common heritage, another concept which they say they support.

The *Barba Negra* Formula would require a moderating of the greed of the "big gainers" among the developed countries, e.g., the U.S., the USSR, Canada, Australia, Norway and South Africa. But there is one reason to believe that reflection—and guilt feelings—could win these nations over. In most of them there are important voices urging a more international approach to the law of the sea. Thus, among those who subsequently endorsed the *Barba Negra* Appeal and its sharing formula were Ambassador Pardo, ocean explorer and anthropologist Thor Heyerdahl of Norway; Charles Yost, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations; Jan Tinbergen, the Nobel Prize-winning Dutch economist; David Knox, a prominent member of the British Parliament; and Maurice Strong, the Canadian who launched the UN Environment program with such vigor.

This article has purposely concentrated on only one substantive aspect of law of the sea policy: sharing a significant portion of the immense mineral treasure of the oceans. But reflection will suggest that, though difficult to achieve, that common heritage sharing is the key to a successful treaty and all the good that can follow from it. To take but one example: while the Conference has spent years talking about pollution of the oceans by ships and by oil rigs, it has before it no positive proposals to deal with what is by far the most important source of ocean pollution: pollution from the land. It seems perfectly clear that even if, which is doubtful, developed countries can be argued into buying the technology which is required to curb that pollution, Third World countries cannot. Grants from the World Common Heritage Fund could make a major contribution to dealing with this very serious problem.

A decision to adopt real common heritage sharing would change the whole psychology of the Conference. The EEZ grab has infected the whole Conference with a spirit of nationalism and selfishness. Many delegates are demanding that coastal states get total jurisdiction not only over resources but also over environmental regulations, dispute settlement and marine research. Some are even demanding a 200-mile territorial sea which would torpedo freedom of navigation.

A willingness to share ocean resources could encourage a willingness to share jurisdiction over other ocean problems. And it could make a major contribution to the development of fish farming, i.e., aquaculture, an important potential for protein for a world

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

whose population is increasing rapidly. It could also assist developing countries in getting—and mastering—the marine technologies which are so important to their economic development.

But, as we have indicated, the hour is late. The Conference—and the bright promise it represents—may well capsize unless there is a new beginning. A bold law of the sea proposal by President Carter could be a major breakthrough in the struggle to achieve peace, economic development and a safe world environment. It could do much to break the present inpasse between East and West and between North and South.

Let us hope that our new President will grab the initiative before it is too late.

SECOND CALL TO ACTION

JAMES FINN

National attention turns to the bishops' meeting

In one of the regional hearings of the bicentennial program sponsored by the Catholic bishops of America, a small girl got up to testify. "If we don't love one another, one another won't love us." I hope that spirit permeates my comments on the future of that bicentennial program.

The attention aroused by the meeting the American Catholic bishops will hold in May is unprecedented. There have been, for example, more applications for press credentials than for any previous general meeting of the bishops. And an impressive number of Catholic organizations and individuals have tried publicly to bring an outline of their own deep interests into focus with what they hope that meeting will accomplish.

The reason for this surge of interest is not that the bishops of this country have suddenly become more popular, but that they are going to consider recommendations derived from the Detroit "Call to Action" conference of October. These recommendations are the consequence of a process that is itself unprecedented in American history, so that at their May meeting the bishops will not follow custom but will establish it. The attention concentrated on that meeting is justified.

The Detroit conference has been widely reported. Anyone who has read accounts of that conference knows that it was the culmination of an immense amount of planning, thought and work, involving Catholics across the country from almost every level and sector of our society. The participants understood that their advice would be considered seriously by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and that their work would help inform and shape a five-year pastoral plan on justice.

The outcome of this program is still uncertain, resting as heavily as it does on the wisdom, the openness, the energy, and the judgment of the bishops. But to grasp fully the boldness and the vision that launched this process, one must recall the state of the Church in this country when the idea developed. It was in early 1973 that the Administrative Committee of the NCCB decided that it would be proper and becoming that the Catholic Church in this country celebrate the national bicentennial with a program based on the theme of justice in the world. Out of that grew the "Liberty and Justice for All" program, the national hearings across the country and the Detroit conference.

At exactly that time, in early 1973, John Tracy Ellis assayed the state of American Catholicism in the pages of this journal. "In the 183 years that have passed since the American Church was formally organized," he wrote, "the Catholic community has experienced a fair share of crisis and untoward movements, but that community has never known anything to approximate its present dispiritedness and disarray." Monsignor Ellis gave partial explanations for the "confusion and uncertainty that now bedevil the Catholic community." That community grew and flourished in this country, accepting almost without question the teaching authority of the Church under conditions which made it easy to assume that the Church had an answer for every question. But when "in the late 1960s, the dam gave way, so to speak, and in the rush and ferment that ensued there broke on Catholic consciousness the unsettling fact that the Church did not have answers to all questions, that there are questions to which no human source can supply an answer, confidence in the Church's reliability began to crumble." Pope John and Vatican II played "a significant part in the subsequent chain of events, but the profound revolution through which humankind was then, and is still, passing has been too

JAMES FINN, *formerly an editor of* Commonweal, *is now editor of* Worldview, *a monthly journal devoted to morality and politics.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all-embracing not to have touched deeply the Catholic Church, as it has every other situation, whether or not there had ever been a Pope John or an ecumenical council. In other words, the roots of the present unease, in my judgment, are to be found more outside the Church than within, more in the cultural and social forces that, willy-nilly, condition Catholics' daily lives."

I agree with this sober assessment of the distinguished historian. I believe, further, that it will help us to understand better the bicentennial program, the Detroit conference, and what we can expect and hope from the May meeting. I would add some qualifications, however. The Catholic community has lived with the sharp realization that the Church cannot provide definitive answers to religious questions for over a decade now. It is no longer a new experience, a new sensation. It is sometimes difficult for those intimately involved in Vatican II to realize that those who were in their late teens during the time of the Council are now in their thirties. They have lived their adult life in the consciousness that they are part of a searching, pilgrim people. They and many of their elders are quite prepared to look to Church leaders, not for ready answers to their own difficult and often painful questions, but for leadership. The exchange they look for is not, then, one of question-and-answer but of dialogue, out of which will emerge new insights and new directions. The bishops of this country have had as little preparation for true dialogue as has the community they serve. The last decade has not been easy for most of them. But they did initiate and support the process of bicentennial hearings, they did ask for advice from the Catholics of this country, they have reviewed the results of this process of broad consultation, and they will consider the recommendations collectively. They have created for themselves a great opportunity.

That "profound revolution" of which Monsignor Ellis wrote and the cultural and social forces that condition our daily lives were evident during the hearings and at Detroit. The delegates discussed and voted on issues concerning ethnicity and race, the poor, the aged, and the handicapped; family and community values; women in society; war, nuclear arms, and global justice; financial responsibility within the Church. And as they did, it became evident that they were reflecting on and bringing into the conference issues that have preoccupied the larger society during the last decade or so. Without claiming that they were the ones to surface the issues, American Catholics now share with many other Americans a concern about the status of women in our society, civil rights for homosexuals, grave economic inequities, racial and ethnic discrimination, multinational corporations. The list of concerns is important. It is also familiar. A true representative of the secular city would recognize many familiar landmarks.

But a number of propositions passed at Detroit could not be as readily categorized: the need for careful preparation for marriage and the permanence of that institution, the recognition of parents as primary in teaching children about sex, support for Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) *and* opposition to abortion, the value of rural life for a good Christian life. These and other propositions make clear that the thousands of Catholics whose concerns helped shape the bicentennial program wish to see our present secular emphases on justice and equality brought within the structure of the Church. At the same time, they wish to see a vigorous Church pursue these values within the society at large. Their religion has not shielded them from those social forces that have rocked all of our major institutions and therefore our own individual lives. That shaking up has, rather, allowed them to reexamine ecclesiastical structures, to see what has fallen into disuse, what is anachronistic or merely cumbersome, what are the trappings of another age and what the message for which such trappings were once considered appropriate. That shaking up has caused Catholics to repair to fundamental questions concerning the message of Jesus the Christ and to ask how, as people of God, they can be faithful to that message.

It would be foolish to pretend to unanimity and consensus where they do not exist, and as a delegate at the Detroit conference who was more than once in a minority position, I know that there were and are sharp differences among the many delegates and among the bishops. But it would be worse than foolish to exploit those differences, to attempt to disguise the much larger measure of agreement that exists. Even apart from the particular issues, there was a deep, shared concern that the bishops truly respond to the aspirations and grievances, the fears and hopes that welled up in all the meetings. As a minor key that accompanied this strong concern there was an undercurrent of anxiety and suspicion that the whole thing might be sidetracked, that the process of consultation in which they had been invited to share might be regarded as a dangerous novelty rather than a fructifying innovation. That anxiety is not simply free-floating but attaches to many events, historical and contemporary. There are many things to trigger such feelings. For example, while anticipating the May meeting I ran across, in Paul Johnson's recent *A History of Christianity,* this brief comment: " 'Antiquity relates that laymen show a spirit of hostility towards the clergy,' wrote Pope Boniface in 1296, 'and it is clearly proven by the experience of the present time.' Having uttered this melancholy reflection, in his bull *Clericos laicos,* Boniface went on to make a number of pronouncements calculated to ensure that the warfare continued."

There are some I know who see at least some of the bishops, *mutatis mutandis,* as present-day Bonifaces and expect that the most unfamiliar and vexing recommendations of the bicentennial program will meet

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

opposition rather than open consideration. As evidence they point to the Declaration on the question of ordaining women to the priesthood issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in January of this year. It is generally accepted that this Declaration, which opposes the concept of women priests in the Catholic Church, was inspired by a request from Church authorities in this country who wish to terminate the discussion. This was a deep misfortune and does strike a sour note before the May meeting. If this incident were to prove typical of the responses to other issues of deep concern to a significant segment of the Catholic community, if the May meeting were to heighten the differences and exacerbate strained feelings, it were better than those who came to regional hearings to pour forth often painful personal testimonies in their

different regional and ethnic accents had stayed at home; better that those who tried to gather this testimony and distill its essence in the Working Papers had turned their energies to their usual scholarly or organizational pursuits; better that the bishops had expended their monies on less damaging enterprises; better that the project had not been conceived or that it had been early aborted.

But if I thought this were a likely, even a possible, outcome, I think I would not have the courage publicly to anticipate it. I expect the bishops to deal with the recommendations seriously. The real problems are (1) how they will assign priorities to the vast number of recommendations (2) what plan they will devise to implement them, and (3) most important, what understanding of the Church will underlie their deliberations and their planning.

To consider these points in order: *First*. It is possible to say, in mere statistical terms, what general themes received most attention during the entire process. On this basis top priority would be given to family life and community values, to the Church's need to share with the poor and to carry on its teaching mission. But on this basis global justice, human rights, and the needs of workers would be put at the bottom of the ladder. Like other approaches that seem to recommend themselves, this is clearly inadequate. The perfect method is still to be found. What has been suggested is that each significant recommendation developed from the consultative process be assigned to an appropriate committee of the NCCB/USCC under a designated chairman. There would then be an office and a responsible person who would see that the dialogic process continued and that action, where called for, would be taken. Some of the recommendations will present little conceptual problem, requiring only the necessary hard work, organization, and money to see that the desired steps are taken.

Others are more problematic. The final propositions that emerged from the section on Humankind, for example, condemned not only the threatened use of nuclear weapons but their production and possession. A very significant issue, going a step beyond the position enunciated by the American bishops in their Pastoral Letter of last November in which they said that "not only is it wrong to attack civilian populations but it is also wrong to threaten to attack as part of the strategy of deterrence." That statement of the bishops runs head on against the present strategic posture of the United States. What consequences flow from this in terms of the teaching Church? What are the political and moral implications?

Another quite different issue that will not disappear concerns the ordination of women. During the hearings one speaker recalled Will Rogers's comment when, on his return from a visit to the Vatican, someone asked what he thought of it. "It lacks a woman's touch," he answered. Instant laughter. An incongruous if not outrageous notion. Well, it's not outrageous anymore. And a declaration that states that "the Church, in fidelity to the example of Our Lord, does not consider herself authorized to admit women to priestly ordination," even if issued with the approval of Pope Paul, does not put an end to the matter. Catholics know full well what the historical practice has been, although most have not thought carefully about the theological basis offered for that practice. But Catholics also know full well that a rationale that appeared adequate for a period past must sometimes give way to a fuller and more complete understanding. The teaching of the Church has changed on the principle of religious liberty, the inerrancy of scripture and ecumenism. It can change on other issues. It is not a question here of moving with the zeitgeist or being carried along by fads, but one of examining seriously an issue that has not been given prolonged consideration previously.

There are other questions, less important or important to fewer people, that have taken on high symbolic importance. These, too, must be on any future agenda if the bishops, who assumed a listening posture during the two-year process, are not to appear as if they had been stricken with intermittent deafness. To do well what

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they are called to do will tax the ingenuity of the bishops. Even if they do their best and their best is very good, they are unlikely to escape criticism. But here the critics themselves have the responsibility of assessing what can be done realistically in the days of the May meeting.

After priorities are assigned, in whatever fashion, there is the *second* problem: What are the structures through which plans will be implemented? Who is going to do what? And with what resources? When one listened, at the plenary session in Detroit, it was impossible not to feel that too much was being placed on the bishops' desks. Much of what was recommended can best be carried out through national and diocesan organizations, religious communities and issue-oriented organizations. Some of these have, in fact, already started working on plans inspired by the bicentennial program. Outlining these distributed responsibilities is itself a necessary educational task of the bishops. If this is done well, one will be able in a year or two or three to evaluate, however roughly, what has been developed successfully, what has failed, and why.

The *third* point—how the bishops approach their task, with what attitude they deliberate on the myriad issues placed before them, how they consider their responsibilities to other Christians in the community of faith—may be the most significant, indeed the crucial, point of the May meetings. Two documents of Vatican II, "The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" and "The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," carry us some distance beyond the understanding of the Church that most Catholics had in the early '60s. Nevertheless, we have seen that, in moments of stress and pressure, some people wish to regress to those earlier, apparently less-troubled times, to assert or to accept on the basis of authority what should be the result of collective thought, action and prayer.

In opening the second session of Vatican II, Pope Paul said: "The Church is a mystery. It is a reality imbued with the hidden presence of God. It lies, therefore, within the very nature of the Church to be always open to new and greater exploration."

The Catholic community of America, this segment of the people of God, has been properly bold and innovative in their exploration. The instrument they are forging is clearly imperfect. It is easy to see flaws in the process of consultation, reflection, study and action that we have gone through in the last two years. But to see the flaws should be a spur to repair them, to perfect the instrument, not to discard it. In various parts of the world that model of the Church that emphasizes the institutional and hierarchical aspects of the Church, the historical model that is comfortable in its familiarity, is being modified, transcended, by a model that stresses the communal and human, a model that can more readily cope with the strong historical currents that stress justice, liberty, human rights.

This is the model more appropriate to the kind of discussion the bicentennial program has initiated. This is the model that will make it easier to see how action for justice could be a constitutive element in Catholic life; to understand better what shared responsibility means, how it would be carried out at different levels within the Church.

When the bishops meet in May, they will be taking part in that process launched with hope and uncertainty years ago. They promised to listen. They promised to respond. They could not have known how much there would be to listen to, how eagerly their response would be awaited, how truly significant an opportunity they had created for themselves. If the Catholic community in this country is to emerge from the "confusion and uncertainty" that Monsignor Ellis attributed to it, much will depend upon the course taken in May. The course must go forward along untried paths, not backward along the familiar well-marked avenues. I believe the bishops can help discover those new paths. I pray they will. And I would appropriate for that prayer these words of Rilke, applying them to what might be a springtime for the Church in America:

"Now, let us believe in the new year that is given us, new, untried, full of things that have never been."

JOYCE HORNER

WORDS FOR MUSIC

Come without sound
Now, while the leaves float brilliant
Through the air
Down,
As the leaves noiseless part from the tree,
Come to me,
Not with the apple's commotion,
The thud in the grass, or the late shut roses'
Slow inward decay,
Let the last life-thread whatever it be
Give way
With the leaves' lightest severance,
So, on such a day,
Now.
Do not wait for the wind and rain
Thrashing, the boughs' crack and rending,
But on silent final wings, landing
In the garden where we began,
Come
This stillest day of fall—
Leaves in the air, leaves still on the tree
Leaves to cover me.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an exchange of views

The Catholic Press

Rockville Centre, N.Y.

To the Editors: Msgr. Adamo opens his article [Mar. 18] by noting that statistics can be twisted, and then proceeds to misstate a couple himself. We need to set the record straight for his benefit and the benefit of your readers:

He says that "over the last several years Catholic magazines have gained 3 million readers, while the newspapers have lost close to one million."

He's nearly right about Catholic magazines: From 1973 (the low point in Catholic magazine circulation in post-Vatican II years) to 1976, total magazine circulation has actually increased by 4,203,556.

However, he's wrong about newspapers. The loss he is apparently referring to was part of a general newspaper circulation decline which began in 1968 (the high point) and continued in the post-Vatican II years until the low point was reached in 1974. But since then (the last several years) there has actually been an increase in total newspaper circulation, from 5,057,957 to 5,239,921.

If we consider only diocesan newspapers we also find that the overall circulation decline began in 1968 and continued until it bottomed out in 1974. Since then, again, there has been an increase both in numbers of diocesan newspapers and in circulations (from 4,343,455 to the present level of 4,598,500). So the loss of close to one million of which Msgr. Adamo speaks seems not to exist. Rather than the decline he refers to, there have been increases in both newspaper and magazine categories the last several years.

As to Msgr. Adamo's remarks about the Catholic Press Association itself: The CPA is hardly dead. How dead is an organization whose membership totals are the highest ever, because of the influx of new publication members by the dozens in recent years, and the establishment of a new class of staff membership which has attracted more than 100 persons in the Catholic press as individual voting members? How dead is a CPA which has just received a grant from Lilly Endowment for a research study to be done by the Gallup organization; in which 17 members compete keenly for four positions on the board of directors; in which even Msgr. Adamo, himself, last year engaged in an attempt to get himself nominated for president (although he wasn't eligible)?

As to the Byington case: The CPA did not wilt, and was not inactive, as Msgr. Adamo charges. The CPA board of directors issued a strong statement relating to the Byington case and several others some months before the resolution sponsored by Msgr. Adamo at the 1976 CPA Convention.

Finally: Msgr. Adamo's churlish lashing of selected diocesan papers gives a false picture. Several of those he dismisses have in recent years won first-place awards in the CPA's annual Journalism Awards competition (among them *The Beacon* of Paterson, *The New World* of Chicago, *The Clarion Herald* of New Orleans, *The St. Louis Review*, and *The Monitor* of San Francisco). It should be noted that *The Monitor*, which he calls the "newsless wonder of the West," has won the top prize for best news reporting the past two years.

JAMES A. DOYLE
Executive Director
Catholic Press Association

Rockville Centre, N.Y.

To the Editors: I admire Msgr. Adamo's long service to the Catholic press and his editorial courage. I share his belief that truth is inviolable and that the Catholic press must be free. For a number of reasons I disagree with his article, "The Catholic Press Today: In Search of a Future."

Msgr. Adamo says newspapers "have lost their sense of news." Various factors can influence one's definition and selection of news. In my opinion conflict is not the only criterion for news nor the bishop's office the only news source. I would judge that most editors in the Catholic press see their function as gathering and disseminating news of the whole faith community rather than as nourishing an adversary relationship with the bishop.

It is not good journalism in my opinion to abandon the facts—no matter how complex—in order to weave a witty story or build a dramatic case.

Regarding the Byington case, on the practical level the Catholic Press Association worked for understanding between the publisher and editor and offered its services for mediation; the offer was not accepted. To safeguard the principle of editorial freedom, the CPA board issued a clear statement condemning prior censorship.

Commonweal's editorial in the same issue deals in such generalities that I find it hard to apply its comments to the Catholic publications and editors—lay or clerical—that I know. The editorial, for example, states: "The fate of Msgr. Adamo . . . speaks reams about the controlled state of much of American Catholic journalism." Yet, each diocese is autonomous. The relationships between bishop-publishers and editors vary. Magazines, for the most part, answer to a religious order superior or are completely independent. Why does Msgr. Adamo's fate indicate that other Catholic publications are "controlled" or reduced to the "near state of house organs"?

Also, what is this "fine print of papal pronouncements" that is "hobbling the American Catholic Press"?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Publications change for better or for worse with new editors and publishers, but overall in the dozen years I've been working in the Catholic press I've seen progress. Catholic publications are covering theological developments with more depth and with more awareness of the pluralism in the Church today. In many papers there's better coverage of the local community, reaching beyond "official" news.

Certainly there is need for improvement in almost every area. Many publications are understaffed in the editorial, promotion/circulation and advertising departments. I am distressed that Catholic publications do not reach more Catholics.

I do not see much evidence of an understanding of the Catholic press today in either Msgr. Adamo's article or *Commonweal*'s editorial. That makes me reluctant to choose them as guides for the future.

(REV.) JEREMY HARRINGTON, O.F.M.
President, Catholic Press Association
Editor/Publisher,
St. Anthony Messenger

San Francisco, Calif.

To the Editors: Recently, I penned a note to Monsignor Salvatore Adamo, praising him for his courageous stands in defense of Catholic Press freedom, and lamenting his forced departure from the editorial chair of the *Catholic Star Herald*. These sentiments still stand.

Alas, the good Monsignor's attack on the Catholic Press in your issue of March 18 bears little resemblance to reality, and many of his strictures are unfounded. We need go no further than his comments on the San Francisco *Monitor*, which he describes as "That newsless wonder of the West."

Well, now! A wonder it may be, but newsless, never! In 1975 and 1976, *The Monitor* won first prize in the National Catholic Press contest for best news reporting—competing against all his favorites. For one year, you might label it an accident, or that the Judges were tipsy, but for two successive years, and with different Judges—it says something.

This "newsless wonder" also has been cited quite frequently in the past several years by its peers (including the secular) for its "editorial courage" in promoting social justice. Admittedly, our editorials hardly ever consider bishop-baiting, but we are not afraid to speak out on the real issues—those which reflect man's yearning for freedom and his right to live in dignity.

Freedom of the Church press is of paramount importance, but with Monsignor Adamo, it has become an obsession—nay, a fetish! There is far more freedom in the Catholic Press than Monsignor Adamo is willing to admit. If he did, the sole purpose of his editorial existence would be shattered.

Monsignor Adamo has the Masada complex. Editorial courage can lead to martyrdom, and there is nothing unchristian or unpriestly in seeking it. However, martyrs usually die for real causes. Creating strawmen so easily demolished is not the role of a genuine martyr—but is often the preoccupation of those who deliberately set out to destroy themselves. Monsignor Adamo's scathing and unreal swan song in your March 18 issue makes one wonder why he should want to self-destruct—when he still has the time and the ability to be truthful and sincere.

GERARD E. SHERRY
Editor-Manager,
The Monitor

Reply

To Jim Doyle:

I should have specified the years of my statistical point about the decline of readership of Catholic newspapers. I compared the 1971 CPA directory with the 1976 booklet. According to them, in 1971 Catholic newspapers in the U.S. had a combined circulation of 6,004,750, which fell to 5,230,833 by 1976. In the same period, Catholic magazines reported 17,575,459 circulation in 1971 which grew to 20,973,280 by 1976. It's a small point, since the statistics were only used in a symbolic way.

So far as the CPA issuing "a strong statement relating to the Byington case," that is a laugh. The CPA statement was so distantly related to the Byington case that you would need a canon lawyer to draw a careful consanguinity chart to locate the relationship.

The fact is the CPA never mentioned the Byington case by name in its alleged condemnation of censorship.

The fact is Jim Doyle repeatedly fudged the issue, changed his directives on numerous occasions and finally refused to put the Byington case on the CPA convention's agenda. Had we not forced it to the floor at the final general meeting of the CPA convention, the Byington case would have been buried with private obsequies by its distant relatives.

Jim Doyle cites awards won by papers I criticized. He should know that awards do not a good newspaper make. Recently, awards were won by the editor of *The Catholic Bulletin* (St. Paul Minn.) who last year admitted his newspaper was no more than a "house organ." Furthermore, what prize-happy editors do to camouflage their failures is point for an award or two. Then they return to their bishops and say, "Look, how great we are; we got first prize for this and for that." And the poor bishops are duly impressed!

Never mind what lies beyond the prize-winning front page. Never mind what news goes unreported week after week. The trick is to produce a few good issues, win a prize or two and go back to the hills of Sleepy Hollow for another year. Incidentally, the CPA is yet to have a first-class school of journalism decide the awards. They find the strangest judges, for a pittance. As they say, you get what you pay for.

To Father Harrington:

He states: "The CPA worked for understanding, between the publisher and editor (in the Byington case) and offered its services for mediation; the offer was not accepted." It's typical doubletalk. He neglects to say by whom the offer was not accepted. So I'll say

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it for him: the offer was rejected by the bishop of Fall River, whereupon the CPA backed down. Then they issued a fine-sounding statement about prior censorship to cover their cowardice. Let them save their pieties for the forthcoming funeral of Catholic newspapers! They are like those hierarchs who preach social justice and the right to organize—until the union comes knocking on Church doors.

To Gerry Sherry:

I love him too much to wound him any further. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

(MSGR.) S.J. ADAMO
Editor, *Catholic Star Herald*
Camden, New Jersey

Editors' Note

As for *Commonweal*'s editorial, no one denies that "each diocese is autonomous," that bishop-publisher and editor relationships vary from see to see, and that magazines answer to another drummer. But this autonomy is all relative, and does not obviate the fact that a cautionary mood predominates. The ecclesiastical leadership is as vigilant over publications as the encyclical *Pascendi*, the outdated early 20th-century preachment of Pope Pius X, instructed it to be.

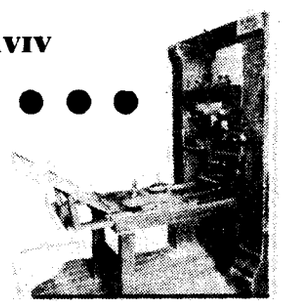
It is perhaps symptomatic of the problems of the Catholic Press that the weakest document to be promulgated by Paul VI at Vatican Council II was the Decree on Social Communications. The document paid the usual ecclesiastical lip-service to freedom of the press and the right to information, but at the same time characteristically restricted each with qualifying clauses. The right to information, for instance, is to be enjoyed "in accord with the circumstances in each case . . . within the bounds of justice and charity," and is to be communicated in manner that is "proper and decent."

Call it "fine print" or not, there are enough "hobbling" words there to put any conscientious editor at a disadvantage, and to perpetuate the "controlled" state spoken of by the editorial, and by Msgr. Adamo.

THE EDITORS

THE ROAD TO TEL AVIV

PRESS



The conflict of Arab and Jew in the Middle East has gone on for so long now; with so little essential change, that you would think everybody would have the outline at least firmly in mind. In its fundamentals the struggle goes back at least to the 1920s; in the alignment of forces to 1945-49; in all but the most minor particulars to 1967. If it were a chess game, dust would long since have settled thickly over pieces and players and the audience gone home. The great chess masters would have abandoned the problem as insoluble and not even the wire services would take note when a player moved a hand with a glacial slowness toward a piece, knowing that sooner or later he'd think better of it and return to his somnolent brooding. So little does the situation change.

But it's not a chess game, the identity of several principal kibitzers has recently changed, and some reporters and commentators have been murmuring deep in their stories that the "climate for peace" has improved and "new initiatives" might now bring "a general settlement." The press, and the public life it reflects, both tend to be obsessional and single-minded and the story of the moment is not the Middle East, but the factors behind the current optimism can be picked up easily enough from Pages 2 through 90. The main ones are three in number:

— The Palestinians have lost their sanctuary in Lebanon, and with it much of the military power which gave them an extraordinary degree of political independence for a people without a country. In April, 1975, the Christian Phalangists—called Al Kataeb in Lebanon—precipitated a military struggle with the Palestinians in the hope they would be crushed much as they had been in Jordan in September, 1970. This was a desperate and crudely conceived maneuver but, amazingly, it worked, thanks to the Syrians.

— For the first time the leaders of Syria, Jordan, Egypt and the oil states all favor the same policy at the same time. They are willing to accept an Israel "within the green lines"—an Israeli phrase referring to the borders of June, 1967—and they are depending on the aid of the United States to force an Israeli withdrawal.

— Jimmy Carter has apparently adopted the compromise settlement which has slowly evolved in the international ether since 1967. On March 7, in remarks welcoming the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to the United States, Carter said Israel had a right to "defensible borders." This is the minimum Israeli demand for a settlement. On March 16, during a town meeting in Clinton, Massachusetts, Carter said he supported "a homeland" for the Palestinians. This (along wtih the Israeli withdrawal which the U.S. has always supported) is the minimum demand of the Arabs.

As a number of reporters have pointed out, these changes in the situation really do constitute, together, about as hopeful a "climate for peace" as a reasonable man might ask. But an actual "settlement"—a piece of paper signed by all parties, whatever the precise details—will demand such fierce resolution on the part of the United States, Egypt and Syria; and would

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have to override emotions of such depth and strength, that optimism seems an act of almost willful innocence. And as for true *peace* . . . well . . . one hardly knows whether to laugh or cry.

There is a certain cheap safety in pessimism, of course, but I'm not trying to be dyspeptic or curmudgeon-only here, or depending on the fundamental cussedness of things which sends so many hopeful initiatives awry. The problem is not the seriousness and good faith of the immediately interested parties, who have probably never been more inclined toward a settlement, but the depth of the collision of two very different peoples over the same small piece of land. It is a sense of this which seems to me to be missing from almost all reporting about the Middle East, as if every story were actually 10,000 words long, but only the first five hundred ever made it into print.

The smallness of the contested territory is generally neglected, for one thing. It is an easy (although hair-raising) day's drive from Beirut to Damascus, and then south from Damascus to Amman. Each leg of the trip costs only a few dollars by Arab taxi. American college students make far longer trips without thinking twice, but not even that gives you a proper notion of how intimately the belligerents are nestled together.

I did not really understand this until one afternoon in June, 1975, when a friend and I drove a rented Fiat from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. We were going to see Arie Eliav, a member of the Israeli parliament who favors returning the West Bank to the Palestinians so they might establish the homeland which Carter mentioned.

The usual route is by the Latrun salient, a trip which takes perhaps an hour, but we had already driven that way and decided to see something of the West Bank instead. So we got out our *Survey of Israel* map and charted a route north from Jerusalem to Ramallah, and then west along winding hill roads toward Tel Aviv. Some of the roads were solid red on the map (marked "First class motor roads" on the legend), some red and white dashes ("Second class motor roads"), some in black outline ("Other roads, all weather"), some in black dashes ("Other roads dry weather"). It hadn't rained in weeks, there were half a dozen alternate dry- and all-weather roads crossing the old West Bank-Israeli border, the entire distance was 50 miles at most, so we allowed ourselves three or four hours and figured we'd have no difficulty.

It was not as easy as it looked. A good road leads west from Ramallah but after that things got sticky. There were frequent forks with no signs, roads wound up mountains to tiny villages and then disappeared, the Arabs we passed along the way did not speak English and we found it all but impossible to pronounce the names of Arab towns marked on the map. But with frequent false starts and reversals, moving as much by the sun as by the map, we slowly progressed up into the mountains in a generally westerly direction.

After an hour or so we got onto a roughly paved road which had to be the right one—the villages were in the right places, we passed side roads right where they should have been, we were at the right elevation, the sun was sinking directly ahead of us. At first there was more pavement than dirt rut, then more dirt than pavement, finally nothing but dirt. Dry brown grass grew between the tire tracks, which did not seem to have been disturbed in weeks. We had scaled the mountains by this time and were on a large, broad, gently rising plateau, a barren ground showing no sign of human life.

The road was all rock now. In fact it was hardly a road at all, the barest memory of a road; the car groaned and pitched at five miles an hour, but it was far too late to turn back. And then beyond the rise the sky met a shimmering line and we saw the sea, astonishingly close. And then we saw the grey towers of Tel Aviv. And then, as we topped the rise and saw the high plateau begins its glide down and away to the sea, we saw the line of trees, as regular as a fence, marking the old border of Israel and Jordan. The trees made us want to laugh, planted as they were right up to the very edge of the border. But the city took our breath away. We might have been standing on the edge of the Palisades in New Jersey, looking across the Hudson River at Manhattan. We were still in Jordan, and Tel Aviv was . . . *right there* . . .

We had seen a good deal of Israel by this time. With other journalists we had gone on Army tours of the Golan Heights, and had flown out into the Sinai to the Gidi Pass, where we had looked at the Suez canal through binoculars. It was easy to see why both places mattered to the military, but for some reason no one had mentioned the West Bank, and here we were on its edge, looking out at Tel Aviv and the sea and the most militarily intolerable situation it is possible to imagine. We might almost have walked to Tel Aviv and still arrived in time for our appointment with Arie Eliav.

Now, whenever I read about a "general settlement" of the Arab-Israeli conflict involving a West Bank Palestinian state, I think of that delicate neck of coastal plain joining the two halves of Israel. How could Israel tolerate a hostile independent state in such a place, one with its own army and military alliances? Israel and the West Bank are folded into each other as intimately as lovers. For two hostile, truly independent states to exist in such proximity is simply impossible. Israel would never tolerate the sort of sophisticated weaponry which the West Bank might acquire so close to her heart, and there must be some question whether the PLO, however desperate its situation or great the pressure from Arab allies, would ever accept the sort of limitations to her sovereignty which Israel would demand.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But even that is only the beginning of the problem. If such a West Bank Palestinian state were to be somehow tinkered or hammered into existence, for how long could it keep the peace with Israel?

This is an aspect of the Middle East conflict which has not achieved the attention it deserves, although there is plenty of evidence of it on Pages 2 through 90. In Cairo shortly before the meeting of the Palestinian National Council in March, George Habash, leader of the Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), said he would never accept a West Bank state as final, or give up the struggle against Israel. A West Bank state would be an Israeli puppet, the "rejection front" of which the PFLP is a leading member would never surrender its right to all of Palestine, and the war would continue.

Habash was asked how this would be possible?

"Why not go on fighting Israel from the new boundaries?" he said.

For the moment the rejection front is largely confined to Iraq, but it represents a powerful undercurrent of feeling in the Palestinian community, it is single-minded and well-organized, and it has proved its ability to carry out highly visible acts of terror of a sort which can poison relations between states. A West Bank Palestinian state would not find it easy to control the irredentists within its overcrowded population, no matter how efficient and ruthless its political police, and the Israelis for obvious domestic reasons would find it equally difficult to tolerate bloody border incidents.

When I think of the Palestinians confined in such a state, curled into the body of Israel, I think of three things:

I think of George Habash giving a speech in Beirut, surrounded by teenagers with machine guns, on the anniversary of Ma'alot, where Palestinian terrorists killed 20 Israeli school children. Habash talked for two hours without interruption, at the sustained pitch of a man under a spell. He has only one note: passionate harangue. I do not know Arabic; I could not understand more than a few words. But I watched the sweat from his body in the hot theater slowly soak the armpits of his light blue shirt, turning it dark. The stain spread to the center of his shirt, then to the sleeves and down the sleeves to the rolled-up cuffs. The sweat soaked his waist, and his leather belt, turning it dark too, and then the sweat stain traveled down his trousers to his knees.

I think of Abu Al Abbas, then a young officer of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, General Command, and now its leader. In the last 18 months I have seen his name two or three times, buried deep in news stories—once after he'd been wounded in fighting with Syrian soldiers during the Lebanese civil war, later when he replaced Ahmed Jibreel as leader of the PFLP General Command, most recently after he escaped to Baghdad. "Freedom is not poetry," he said when I met him. "We learn about freedom through a long history of blood and sacrifice. It requires death. And we are not death amateurs."

I think of an Israeli military strategist who worked for a think tank in Jerusalem, a hard, intelligent man. He was in favor of surrendering the West Bank, with suitable safeguards. "We should give them one more chance," he said. "But if they cause trouble again we should chase every last one of them across the Jordan River and right out into the desert."

The statesmen might get their settlement, and the PLO might get its West Bank state, but I'm not sure how long it would last. The likely result, after a few years of bitter conflict, would be a new war ending in a new occupation of the West Bank by Israel.

Ask yourself: what would be the prospects for peace then?

THOMAS POWERS

'CASANOVA' CONCLUDED

THE SCREEN

In the last issue I was explaining why I feel Fellini works best when he works by a kind of aversion. From his manner on the set, which is bluff and exasperated, to his movement of the camera, which is scurrying and evasive, he always gives the impression that he wishes he were somewhere else—that he finds wherever he is aggravating and distasteful. This is the charm of his movies, in fact, this revulsion he has for his own creations. His own creations are what the grotesque characters and fabulous sets in his films are, after all; and our interest in Fellini comes from the wonderment we feel at a man who would go to such trouble to construct a world he hates. His new film, *Fellini's Casanova,* is a case in point, for Fellini claims he made the film only because he had signed the contract and in spite of finding Casanova himself "a stereotype . . . a meaningless universality."

Another example this film provides of Fellini's ability to be inspired by his own displeasure is found right in the opening scene. There a great carved head was supposed to be pulled up by ropes from the Grand Canal in Venice as part of a pageant Casanova attends. But on the day the scene was shot, the head had only emerged by half when the actuating mechanism failed and it settled back into the water again. What Fellini originally planned to do with this scene is impossible to say since he works with no shooting script. (The fact that he works this way suggests he always counts on making new material out of unforeseeable and untoward

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

accidents he expects to befall him as he goes along.) But the interesting thing about the movie he ended up with is how integral—indeed, one might even say seminal— that sunken head in the opening scene is.

Having closed the scene with an underwater shot of the head resting on the bottom of the canal, Fellini returns to this image at the film's end when Casanova looks through ice that covers the canal in winter and sees the head frozen in the water below him. In between, this sunken sculpture goes through a variety of metamorphoses. It's a masthead raised from a wreck which Casanova finds in a lover's garden. It's Casanova himself nearly drowning in a suicide attempt in the Thames River. It's a glimpse of his mother's head encased in the windows of her carriage in winter just as the sculpture will be encased in ice a few scenes later on. Here as elsewhere symbolism circulates through Fellini's film the way Casanova's hat floats down the Thames, on a series of swirls and eddies. Like his vision of the Thames, Fellini's movies are in effect giant whirlpools in which his heroes and his audience are trapped. Images bump into us like flotsam carried along on the force, and then sooner or later they all bump into us again as we and they are swept around endlessly together.

It's a dizzying experience, yet at times we realize dimly that there is also a progression of some sort to it. The chaos is all moving in a concerted direction, downward, like a whirlpool. In Casanova's case this is a progression from screwing to getting screwed. In the early scenes, for instance, when Casanova mounts a woman, she is alternately eclipsed and revealed by an incredibly dark shadow Fellini has contrived to have him cast. But as the film goes on, Casanova himself begins moving in and out of equally severe shadows—foreshadows, in effect—which life is casting on him. He ceases to be the subject of the sentences with which his life is written and begins being the object of them instead. Thus, where he whips the derrière of one mistress and makes love to another who has fainting spells in an early scene, later he himself falls into a faint and is revived by a woman who uses a similar little whip on him to do so.

As I mentioned in my last column, many of the women Casanova makes love to come in pairs of high- and low-born. But there's also another strain of lovers in the film, lone women who are more important to him. Where the pair of women are the high notes and flourishes, these women singly met are the low, sustaining notes in the organ fugue. They are, in order of appearance: the nun who offers herself to Casanova in the opening love scene, a woman named Henriette who is the only one he ever truly loves, a giantess from a circus, his mother, and a mechanical woman with a clockworks he finds in a German castle. These women are the stations of Casanova's cross. They mark the episodes along the route he takes to damnation.

Sandwiched between a promiscuous nun, a giantess and a mechanical woman, the only two women who ever mattered to Casanova, Henriette and his mother, are cut off from the rest of his life. Like the protagonists in every Fellini film, they find themselves surrounded by grotesques. The last of these grotesques, the mechanical woman, is also Casanova's last love affair. She is the ideal woman to whom Casanova's whole life has brought him and whose emptiness of all thought or feeling matches his own. In that concluding fantasy scene where Casanova is on the ice of the Grand Canal in winter, all the other women from his own past approach him; but they all fade from view before they have even come near. The only one who remains, the one he dances with on the ice as the film closes, is the mechanical woman.

At the end, then, Casanova remains completely unredeemed. In fact, he is a more vacuous figure than ever. He is as transparent as the ice on which he stands, as frozen in time as the giant head in the canal beneath him. His failings, his pretenses and his limitations are now *so* obvious that he isn't even repulsive anymore. He is only pathetic. And yet in this final scene, with all Casanova's illusions gone and all his defenses down, Fellini grants him perhaps a certain surprising dignity, a certain nobility even. The truth is that Fellini is drawn to these empty heroes precisely because the pathos in them is so much more accessible. They readily illustrate the foolishness of the whole human race, and thus they renew once again Fellini's ability to feel compassion for his fellow man. That is what Fellini always sees in such inane characters. He is, we must always remember, a great admirer of clowns.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

PHILIP K. JASON

DEFINITION

As the thumbed mint leaf
snaps back its fresh tang,
I want to snap back, carom,
recoil harder than the felt pressures.

I want to be like new-cut wood
turned sleek under the oiled rag.

I want to bring myself into focus,
to stop this smooth dissolving
into the rest of the world.

I want to throw a sharp shadow
back against its blankness,
step out of the frame
of the liquid mirrors
and dry myself quickly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JOIN THIS YEAR'S

Commonweal Associates

Charter Members

Dr. James S. Anderson, Ilion, N.Y.
Anonymous, New Haven
Anonymous, Evanston, Ill.
Rev. Richard Armstrong, New York
Dr. Joseph C. Barbaccia, San Francisco
Lawrence Betz, Chicago
James MacGregor Byrne, Chevy Chase
Ms. L.A. Jeanne Cayre, San Francisco
Mrs. George L. Craig, Jr., Sewickley, Pa.
Mr. & Mrs. John F. Donnelly, Holland, Mich.
Hon. Robert F. Drinan, Washington
Lee F. Driscoll, Ambler, Pa.
William Dunfey, Hampton, N.H.
Mrs. Ralph Dwan, Washington
Henry D. Ellis, Wallace, Idaho
Mrs. F.T. Faust, Louisville
W.H. Ferry, Scarsdale, N.Y.
Dr. & Mrs. James B. Finn, St. Louis
Ken & Ella Mae Gogel, Cedar Falls, Iowa
Mrs. Robert F. Goheen, New York
Peg & John Griffith, Hinsdale, Ill.
Walter H. Gruber, Detroit
Mrs. Philip A. Hart, Washington
In Memory of Judge & Mrs. B.B. Horrigan, Pasco, Wash.
John F. Hunt, New York
Harold Isbell, Salt Lake City
Dr. Murray L. Jones, Keene, N.Y.
Rev. Edward F. Kennedy, CSSR, Alberta, Canada
Walter Kerr, Larchmont, N.Y.
Thomas S. Klise, Peoria, Ill.
Mrs. Irving F. Laucks, Santa Barbara
Barbara A. McCafferty, MD, Moylan, Pa.
Rev. John McKenzie, Chicago
Mrs. Vincent Martineau, Holland, Mich.
Mrs. Julian Maynard, Los Angeles
Samuel V. Merrick, Washington
William J. Moore, Downers Grove, Ill.
William Pfaff, Paris
Mr. & Mrs. Roy J. Pierson, Kenilworth
Helen Reynolds, Arlington, Va.
Msgr. Charles Owen Rice, Pittsburgh
Mrs. Leland Schubert, Cleveland
Sheed, Andrews and McMeel, Mission, Kans.
Rev. Gerard Sloyan, Philadelphia
Gregory B. Smith, New York
John & Cleo Stipp, Galesburg, Ill.
Edward S. Sullivan, San Diego

Sustaining Members

Anonymous, Los Angeles
Anonymous, Middlebury, Vt.
Dr. James D. Barger, Las Vegas
Joseph P. Bevak, Latham, N.Y.
John Bodner, Jr., Washington
Mrs. Leonard Bolane, Amsterdam, N.Y.
Stephen Breen, Manchester, Conn.
John J. Bresnan, Pelham, N.Y.
Mrs. William T. Brunot, Richmond
Francis L. Burke, Matawan, N.J.
Mrs. Charles B. Cannon, Chicago
Msgr. George W. Casey, Lexington, Mass.
Mrs. Charles Chatfield, Belmont, Mass.
Arthur A. Cohen, New York
Richard E. Collins, Silver Spring, Md.
Joseph E. Connolly, Northfield, Ill.
Dr. Bernard Cooke, Windsor, Ontario
Peter J. Crotty, Buffalo
Margaret Culkin, San Diego
Adma & François d'Heurle, Ossining, N.Y.
Timothy V. Dillon, Washington
W.J. Dillon, Ottawa, Ontario
Bernard J. Dobbins, Vacaville, Calif.
Katherine J. Dotts, Philadelphia
Richard B. DuBoff, Haverford, Pa.
Christina F. Egan, St. David's, Pa.
Msgr. John J. Egan, Notre Dame, Ind.
Rt. Rev. John Eidenschink, O.S.B., Collegeville, Minn.
Edward J. Fencl, Meeker, Okla.
Dorothy Gallagher, Kansas City
Jim Gallatin, Vinitia, Okla.
Donald Gancer, Oak Park, Ill.
Walter T. Grady, Dayton
Joseph G. Grassi, Fairfield
Doris Grumbach, Washington
Roland N. Harman, Washington
Msgr. George G. Higgins, Washington
Virginia Hughes, Valley Cottage, N.Y.
Mrs. Dwight A. Jackson, Winston-Salem
Richard F.C. Kegel, M.D., Aberdeen, Wash.
Dorothy N. Kelly, Kensington, Md.
Edwin Larkin, Eau Claire, Wis.
Paul LaRoque, Outremont, Quebec
Virginia Belle Lowers, Los Angeles
Lee McCaffrey, Claremont, Calif.
Alfred R. McCauley, Silver Spring, Md.
Marie T. McDonough, New York
Anne B. McGlinchy, Maspeth, N.Y.
Michael McHale, Bloomsburg, Pa.
Chaplain H.T. McManus, San Diego
Patricia MacManus, New York
Joseph P. Malloy, Gary, Ind.
Rev. Thomas Mannion, Brooklyn
Dr. William E. Manz, Oceanside, N.Y.
Henry F. May, Berkeley, Calif.
Mrs. Daphne Hoffman Mebane, New York
Mary Menig, Denver
Aileen A. Moore, Chicago
Nina Polcyn Moore, Sauk Centre, Minn.
Frances A. Murphy, Geneva, N.Y.
Joseph E. Murray, MD, Wellesley Hills, Mass.
Rev. Lawrence J. Murtagh, Wilmot, Minn.
Leo Pfeffer, Brooklyn
Dr. Robert D. Phelps, Bloomington, Minn.
Mrs. Hester M.E. Pickman, Bedford, Mass.
Mrs. Roger L. Putnam, Sr., Springfield, Mass.
Rev. James Reese, Jamaica, N.Y.
B.R. Reuscher, St. Marys, Pa.
Dr. Michael J. Reilly, McLean, Va.
Lee and Bill Reynolds, Larchmont
R. P. Schlingerman, Minneapolis
Mrs. Leonard Sackett, Fargo, N.D.
Rev. Thomas M. Santa, Topeka
Noel E. Sherry, Mexico City
Joseph Sodja, San Jose, Calif.
James T. Vocelle, Vero Beach, Fla.
Marianne Willisch, Evanston, Ill.
Veronica D. Winder, Washington
E.G. Wood, Katonah, N.Y.
Dr. Thomas L. Wright, Cincinnati
Gordon Zahn, Boston
Rev. Joseph Zalotay, Washington

COMMONWEAL ASSOCIATES, 232 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y. 10016

Please enroll me as a 1977 member of the Associates to enable *Commonweal* to continue its work.

☐ Charter Member $100 or more
☐ Full amount enclosed
☐ Sustaining Member $50
☐ Half the full amount enclosed; remind me of the balance in 6 months.

Name .....

Address .....

City, State, Zip .....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE KINGDOM AND THE PAPACY

JOHN L. McKENZIE

The Triple Crown

VALERIE PIRIE

Consortium, $12.

A Pope For All Christians

PETER J. McCORD, ED.

Paulist Press, $7.50

The two titles here are both concerned with the Papacy, but they have little else in common. Ms. Pirie professes to write the history of the papal elections from 1455 (Calixtus III) to 1878 (Leo XIII). The survey is prefaced by a full and rather interesting study of the electoral procedures, viewed both in law and in practice. P. goes considerably beyond her chosen topic by including brief sketches of the government of each Pope elected. I do not think this was a good idea. The history of papal elections turns into a handbook of papal history over more than four hundred years. The scope of such a survey would discourage the most ambitious historian. The snap judgments of each Pope to which P. is compelled do not permit justice to be done to such an assortment of characters. P. is the only historian I have seen (and church history is not my field) who renders such a favorable judgment on Clement XIV, celebrated only for the suppression of the Jesuits in 1773. Likewise I have seen no writer so hostile to Sixtus V, hardly the most amiable of Popes. The sainted Pius V comes off rather poorly, as it seems he deserves. In any case, the materials for such judgments are simply not presented.

P. eschews the conventional apparatus of erudition, such as expository footnotes and citation of sources. She does produce a generally readable text. This reviewer is in no position to find fault for the missing apparatus. Nevertheless, he must say to himself and to P. that the use of the apparatus did not keep Ludwig von Pastor from writing one of the most readable histories produced in modern times. Being readable did not keep Pastor from being authoritative. This reader, at least, felt some uneasiness at P.'s somewhat casual use of sources. She knows them; the work shows that she used the books listed in an appendix. One is not sure about the uncritical use of such sources as the letters of the Venetian ambassador or the diaries of Cardinal de Retz. Neither of them qualify as detached observers, although they were monumental gossips. When their prejudices are known, they ought to be thrown into the balance.

Uncritical use of sources was not necessary to show that this is a sad story. If the papal elections had been conducted as cleanly and honestly as the elections in the city of Chicago, this book and others like it could not have been written. I am not being facetious. The politicians of the First Ward could learn from this book—except that they would almost surely get arrested if they tried it. P.'s review of conclaves raised a new doubt in my mind, and, for what it is worth, I would like to share it. Canonical laws invalidating simoniacal elections go back to Gregory VII (1073-1085). Invalidity is a fact whether it is known or proved or not. The laws meant that the man whose election is bought simply is not Pope. The doubt which arose in my mind was a doubt about the number of years in the period surveyed by P. in which the Roman Catholic Church by its own standards had no visible head. And since the invalidly elected Pope could not appoint cardinals with a valid franchise to elect a Pope, in how many elections was the majority composed of men who had no vote?

P.'s general thesis is that the temporal power of the Papacy was the root of all corruption. It follows that the corruption was radically removed in 1870. Many observers will find this simplistic. The Papacy lost only political power, which is fragile in the modern world anyway. But there are other forms of power, power meaning here the capacity to impose your will upon others, of which the Papacy was not deprived and which it has shown no likelihood of renouncing. There is a certain power enjoyed by one who is believed by several hundred million people to be the Vicar of Christ. There is a certain power rooted in wealth, with which the Papacy is endowed to a degree which it has not disclosed. If P. thinks that there is no longer room for ambition in the Roman Catholic Church, she has much to learn.

A Pope for All Christians is a collection of essays written by some distinguished theologians of the major churches in the United States; Joseph Burgess (Lutheran), Avery Dulles (Roman Catholic); C. B. Hastings (Baptist), Ross Mackenzie (Presbyterian), John Meyendorff (Orthodox), J. Robert Nelson (Methodist), J. Robert Wright (Anglican). Peter J. McCord, the editor, is a Roman Catholic. An introductory chapter was written by R. McAfee Brown (Presbyterian). The contributors were invited to set forth the teachings of their own churches on church authority, to show how this teaching confronted the Roman Catholic idea of authority and Papacy, and to suggest some modifications which might make the idea of the Papacy acceptable to Protestant churches.

The essays are very models of intelligent theological discussion, well

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mannered and free of the ancient language of controversy, perceptive of the beliefs of others, and unusually clear—unusually, that is, for theologians, who sometimes seem to cultivate the obscure for its own sake. Catholic readers will find this book an excellent exposition of Protestant theologies of church authority, a topic on which we Romans are generally misinformed. Most Catholics do not know that Protestants oppose the Papacy to something, not to nothing. We ought to recognize that the Papacy is a post-biblical institution and that it is a product of history, often of the type of history summarized in the first volume reviewed here. I ought to point out that the Protestant theologians who wrote these essays spend no time in rehearsing the corruptions of Romanism; their objections are theological, and these must be addressed.

I am sorry to report that most of the contributors see no modification of the Papacy which will make it acceptable to them. Ross Mackenzie and J. Robert Wright see more possibilities than the other contributors; but one must notice that Rome has shown no inclination whatever to move in the directions which they indicate. Some will accept a role which can be called "leadership"; the term is vague, but I believe the authors mean to keep it vague. If the role of the Pope is any more closely defined, they see the nose of the camel of the primacy of jurisdiction at the door of the tent. They are quite correct in this fear. The representatives of the more "congregational" churches do not even see any use in a role of leadership; they believe the local church as described in the New Testament has all the resources of leadership it needs. It is only fair to say that no church except the local church is described in the New Testament.

None of the contributors is happy with the present state of church disunity, even those who seem to think that unity will be achieved only in the eschatological church. As long as the church is administered by men, they believe "unity" (whatever it may mean) is a chimerical ideal. Love should be sought first, and from love unity can proceed. There is a genuine Protestant fear that church unity may become a vehicle of power. They do not fear this only from the Papacy; they fear it in their own churches as well, but they believe that the Protestant church structure does not of itself tend to become a power structure. To preserve some values they believe that unity of structure must be given a lower priority than Roman Catholicism has traditionally given it.

This all seems to put the ball in the ecumenical game right into the Roman Catholic court. I think it was clear from the beginning of the enthusiasm which was generated by John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council that civil conversations between divided Christians must proceed. I have engaged in some of these myself, and they were worth all the trouble and expense they demanded. But it was foolish to think that all we had to do was to present the beauties of Roman Catholicism to Protestants and they would form lines to present their homage to the Roman Pontiff. Catholics often thought Protestantism was a religious vacuum. I hope we have learned that it is not.

Nothing will happen ecumenically until the Roman See does something. What that can be or will be only the Roman See can decide. I have no new criticisms of Romanism to add to those already uttered. But it seems that the Roman See, if it wishes to be the representative of Christ (I do not like the word "vicar" to designate a role which was once filled by Alexander VI and Leo X), will have to think of what it can yield, what it can give, rather than what it must demand, what it must impose. In fact, when Protestants say they can accept a Papacy which has a role of leadership and not of government, they do not realize that leadership is the one thing which the Papacy has most rarely shown.

Perhaps the greatest blessing that was ever bestowed upon the Church of Rome was the loss of her temporal power. It eliminated automatically all those unprincipled, ambitious candidates who coveted the triple crown merely for the immense riches and power it conferred on its wearer. It seems incredible that anyone acquainted with the scandalous intrigues, the simony, the unbridled display of human passions seething behind the closed doors of papal conclaves, should still uphold or wish to see restored a state of things which caused, by the discredit it brought on the Roman Church, such a religious upheaval as the Reformation with its ensuing trail of bloodshed and persecutions.

—The Triple Crown

Jonoah and the Green Stone

HENRY DUMAS

Random House, $7.95

Meridian

ALICE WALKER

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $7.95

GORDON BURNSIDE

The word "meridian" covers a number of meanings. It is a town in Mississippi. It is a geophysical concept, the great circle that connects the earth's two poles. It is an aesthetic concept, excellence, the highest point of development. It is the place where Albert Camus wound up *The Rebel*: a hot, lazy region of the mind—something like his own French Algeria—a place where the body reigned, politics were in disrepute, and ideological murder was unthinkable.

The New Left of the 1960s began at Camus's idea of the meridian. We

ADULT VOCATIONS
special program for men over twenty-one. Write:
ADULT VOCATIONS
Box 41H, Commonweal

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

forget now, awash in our own disgust with politics, that the early Movement was itself anti-political, that its one great want was to transcend the narrow political life. Listen to Bob Moses of SNCC preaching Camus to the Freedom Summer volunteers at Oxford, Ohio in 1964. Recall Stokeley Carmichael a year earlier in rural Alabama; shirtless in overalls, astride an old mule, he is telling an uncomprehending *Time* reporter about resistance, rebellion and the death of the cramped, political self.

The English journalist Godfrey Hodgson has written of the SNCC kids that they discovered something that, ironically enough, their white southern enemies had been the only group in the United States to acknowledge: that success is not the only test, that since, in the end,

THE HOLOCAUST AS MEASURE

JOHN GARVEY

Critics of the war in Vietnam frequently compared the conduct of the United States to that of Nazi Germany. The war was outrageous, but the comparisons were wrong, an example of the rhetorical overkill which blots out honest thinking in a passionate attempt to drag people to thought by the scruffs of their necks. I don't mean to say that those who made the comparisons were dishonest. Their goal was to reveal evil as particular, concrete—to make it clear that the American war in Vietnam and the Nazi conquest of Europe finally had nothing to do with abstractions like "victory over the forces of darkness" but came down to napalmed children and death camps.

The problem is that a failure to distinguish between one and the other has the opposite effect. It makes evil abstract, a concept to be laid like a grid over any situation in which there are victims. There is something drastically wrong with the notion that agonies can be compared. The evils done in Vietnam—the misery and suffering of civilians, the attempt to destroy an environment through defoliation and schemes to render agricultural land infertile, terror weapons like napalm and fragmentation grenades—should not require comparison to reveal them as the evils they are. It is easy to see why we reach for comparisons: in a strange way it is consoling to be able to say "this is like that." It makes us believe that we understand a situation. (Even a generalization about how violent the 20th century is locates us, makes us know that we are at home in a particular time.)

But the real suffering of real people should not become an easy metaphor. The viciousness directed against the Jews by Nazism was unprecedented, even in the terrible history of anti-semitism. Other peoples have suffered genocide, but none so efficiently organized or so ecstatically undertaken. Millions who were not Jews died under Hitler; but there is simply no doubt that Nazism considered the Jews as the worst of all evils, and the source of evil.

This focused hatred, and the general indifference of the rest of the world, have left an understandable suspicion among many Jews that Nazism was the flare-up of an evil which now lies waiting for another opportunity. Is this simply a paranoid reaction? The world has in fact found it easy to forget. A high school student tells me that we fought World War Two to stop "Hitler and his communists"; he has never heard of the death camps. A Christian newspaper runs an editorial about efforts to deport an Orthodox bishop who is alleged to have participated in a slaughter of Jewish prisoners. He should be forgiven, say the editors, and the fact that he has not repented of the crime or asked for forgiveness —a fact which makes forgiveness an extremely sloppy concept—does not seem to matter. On *60 Minutes* a story about attempts to deport another Nazi war criminal featured a discussion with men and women in a bar near the man's home. The majority opinion did not even reach the usual shallow "forgive and forget" level. "Forget" was enough.

On the one hand there is this fog; on the other, people who make of the holocaust a metaphor. We can never allow it to become an abstract thing. It was the result of specific attitudes, political actions, personal acts of cowardice and compliance and compromise. It must be seen not only as a mass phenomenon, but as a horror which happened to particular men, women, and children.

Three books can be of great help here. The first is Lucy Dawidowicz's *The War Against the Jews* (Bantam, $2.50). This detailed history of the period from 1933-1945 shows the passage from pervasive anti-semitic prejudice, through anti-semitic legislation, to slaughter; it deals with the allegations of Jewish compliance, and with the indifference of the rest of the world. Dawidowicz stresses the unprecedented nature of the mass murder undertaken by the Nazis, and the desperation of those who came slowly to realize that nothing in the history of law or human society could offer them any guidance on how to survive. The most dreadful aspect of the time was this fact of utter powerlessness in the face of evil, the knowledge that nothing could be done. The story of the camps and the ghettos is a harrowing one, and Dawidowicz's control in relating it is astonishing. *The War Against the*

JOHN GARVEY *is the author of* Saints for Confused Times (*Thomas More Press*).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

failure is the fate of most human endeavors, what matters is with what enterprise and in what spirit one fails.

Camus and the South fit like fingers in a glove. When Movement people sang about "overcoming," they had segregation and racism only incidentally in mind.

The poet Alice Walker was a Georgia-born SNCC field worker, as is the heroine of her first novel, Meridian Hill. Meridian is black and Southern, but her family, and especially the mother who resents and dislikes her, is almost Yankee in its shabby, self-enclosed middle-classness. Made pregnant by her high school boyfriend, and engineered by her mother into marriage to him, Meridian is confused and unhappy to the point of autistic withdrawal. She is

---

Jews is essential to any understanding of the period.

Simon Wiesenthal is best known as a "Nazi hunter" and has written about his work; in *The Sunflower* (Schocken, $7.50) he writes of something else: an experience he endured as a young man, when a nurse took him from a concentration camp work detail to the bedside of a dying Nazi, who asked Wiesenthal, as a Jew, to forgive him for his part in the massacre of Jews. Wiesenthal felt that he was unable to forgive offenses which were not committed against himself—how could he forgive the torment inflicted on others?—and left the room without forgiving the man. The refusal haunted him, and the book is a question: what would *you* do? Wiesenthal's essay is followed by a symposium in which a number of people, Christians and Jews, jurists and theologians and writers, try to answer the question. As interesting as the responses are, this aspect of the book bothers me. I could not escape the sense that the comments were delivered from comfortable armchairs (a difficulty which was acknowledged by several participants in the symposium). It seems wrong to say from a position of relative calm that a man in Wiesenthal's extreme position was wrong to do what he did, or, for that matter, that he was right. There is something inappropriate about moving from the depth of such an agonizing decision to a seminar table. Insofar as the question is addressed to an audience which is braced for it, it is not a real question; it becomes too cool and detached, like an ethics exam. But this may finally be the value of the book: It shows that there is something wrong with judgment done from safe places. The book is an important one. Many of the responses to Wiesenthal's essay are good, and the nature of the symposium does not make the incident or the question any the less haunting.

In *New Lives* (Knopf, $8.95) Dorothy Rabinowitz writes about survivors of the holocaust who now live in the United States. She interviewed men and women of varying educational and economic backgrounds, people scattered throughout the country, who have in common the fact that they lost everything, and went on living. Rabinowitz writes with the precise eye of a novelist; the book has unforgettable moments: a woman returns to Poland years after the war to visit Maidanek. When she arrives at the oven in which her sister died in her place, she impulsively crawls into it to retrieve some ashes; then a terrible panic seizes her. A man whose family perished remarries and finds that his second wife, under a veneer of gaiety and civility, cares for no one and considers his past a kind of embarrassment. The survivors Rabinowitz interviewed share an understanding that their experience has marked them off from others, radically: "One learned that it was quite possible that he would be asked, straightforwardly or otherwise, by what means he had purchased his life; and often those who were asked these questions learned that such questioning was a pattern, best stored away with other strange responses they had encountered, each new one a proof to them that they and their experiences were utterly incomprehensible to all those who had not been part of it."

By looking at evil's specific incarnations, and its effect on particular lives, we can begin to understand the shallowness of the generalizations we are tempted to make about it. Robert Coles mentions somewhere the fact that great artists (his example was Dostoevski) manage to convey deeper psychological insight than psychologists themselves. Perhaps this is because artists deal with specific things—not mercy or dread in the abstract, but the merciful or fearful human being; not "love" as an idea, but love in a particular situation. This is true of historical horror as well, and it is what makes *New Lives* so valuable: Dorothy Rabinowitz is able to move from the individual level to the level of history without oversimplification or falsehood. In describing the reaction of a survivor of Belsen to My Lai she writes, "For many days after the story became known, the prospect of watching the news on television sent her from the living room in despair, just as, a moment later, the news drew her back in again. She could not watch the film clips, and neither could she turn her back on them: for whatever their political opinions, survivors were always to be one in this: they were compelled to know the news of atrocity, and to believe it. . . . They could never quite attain to the onlooker's mentality, and they tended to respond viscerally to that most difficult of things to respond to: tragedy in the mass—Biafra and Bangladesh, massacre and famine. It was not a choice of good over evil in the survivors that made them thus incapable of indifference; it was often not a choice at all, but a condition: whether they wished it or not, they would see what they might have wished not to see, and feel what it was most comfortable not to feel."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rescued from this state by the appearance of a band of free-spirited civil rights workers. Encouraged by them, she abandons son and husband, and goes off on a scholarship to Saxon College in Atlanta.

Now black girls' colleges in the early '60s were essentially finishing schools; daughters were sent to them to be made more "northern" and "nice." Meridian is of course torn between the school's guiding spirit—an institutionalized version of her mother's—and her ongoing involvement in civil rights. She locates a solution—her personal "meridian," as it were—under The Sojourner, an ancient magnolia that stands in the center of the campus. School legend has it that a slave nursemaid, Louvinie, once told wild, beguiling stories there to the white planters' children. But Louvinie had a rebellious soul, and one of her tales was so awful that it, perhaps deliberately, caused the favorite son to die of a heart attack. For this Louvinie's tongue was cut out and buried beneath The Sojourner. Meridian understands this to be *the* parable of the South. "Without one's tongue in one's mouth . . . the singer in one's soul was lost forever, to grunt and snort through eternity like a pig." She decides to become Louvinie's lost tongue.

From this point forward, Ms. Walker's novel takes a fictionally odd course. Meridian will wander the South in the '60s, leading marches, registering voters, organizing. She will have an affair with the SNCC leader Truman Held, will give him up to the Jewish Lynne, and finally take them back as her acolytes after their marriage founders on the shoals of black separatism. But these scenes are fragmentary and rather brittle, and this is so because what Meridian is really up to is jettisoning her personal attachments, her personal history, her self, in order to be the medium for generations of poor black women. By the end of the book, and quite deliberately, she is little more than a wraith.

We have, in short, a novel with a disappearing central character, and that is a contradiction in terms. But if *Meridian* is a failure as a novel—and I think it is—it is also an extremely interesting historical document. SNCC itself was a great disappearing act. Bob Moses, its spiritual leader, first changed his name and then exiled himself to England because he was afraid that the press, by focusing on him, would screen out all those ordinary black voices he so desperately wanted heard. In the same way, we learn surprisingly little about the outer shell of the Movement from Ms. Walker's book, but—as Meridian Hill fades, and the story is taken over by the secondary black women whose tales and legends she collects—we enter, instead, the Movement's very heart.

The black civil rights movement was profoundly anti-individualist, and therefore subversive of both dominant American culture and the novel as a literary form. Henry Dumas, who grew up in Mississippi and Arkansas in the '40s and then went north to become a poet and black studies teacher, demonstrated this fact in a tragic way. In 1964—four years before his mysterious death at the hands of a New York subway cop—Dumas began work on *Jonoah and the Green Stone*, a vast novel of the South. The surviving bits and pieces of that book ("arranged" here by Eugene B. Redmond for Random House) show it cracking up after a strong start because Dumas had lost his grip on his individualist hero.

Jonoah, a seven-year-old boy, is orphaned by and takes his name from the Mississippi River flood of 1937. The river, indeed, is Dumas's most memorable character:

> And all the land seemed to sense a bad year. Rabbits and squirrels ran off somewhere. Mama used to say they were looking for the Ark. People got a bit friendlier, and everybody knew it was because deep down inside no one wanted to move. But there was nothing you could do about it when the river rose. . . . When that river broke over the mud line and climbed up over the levee and headed toward the farms and town, there wasn't much even the Federal Government could do but obey the river and move.

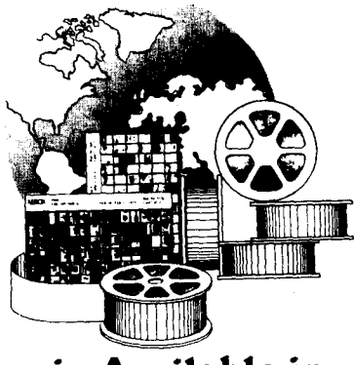
Adrift in a johnboat, Jonoah takes aboard the Masterson family and, a little later, the poor white, Dog Whitlock. These will be the book's commanding figures—or rather would have been, if Dumas had found a way to keep them going.

Whitlock is a frightening creation, aimless rage personified. "God aint have to do that," he tells Papa Lem Masterson:

> He done took everything in this flood except me, and I aint forgettin it. When this rise drops, I'm changin my religion, from a backslider to a nothin. And, nigger, you better do the same.

And if God must persecute Whitlock, then Whitlock will do the same to his benefactors, simply because they are close to hand and black. The ensuing struggle for control of the boat ranks with the river stories of Twain and Faulkner. Papa Lem cowers helplessly at the tiller; his wife Mamada and little Jubal resist, and are thrown over-

commonweal...



is Available in MICROFORM

For Complete Information WRITE :

University Microfilms International

Dept. F.A.
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48106
U.S.A.

Dept. F.A.
18 Bedford Row
London, WC1R 4EJ
England

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

board; Lili Masterson goes mad, and Jonoah, watching all this, learns how terrible, more terrible than a flood, the power of white skin can be.

So ends the one successful long fragment of Dumas's novel. A middle section, concerning Jonoah's youth with the Mastersons, is mostly notes: characters raised and abruptly dropped, memories shading off into dreams, snatches of sermons and poetry, a jumble. We are told that Jonoah leaves his adopted family to go north, where he becomes a sort of minstrel on the periphery of the Movement. We are also told that the Mastersons, who have remained in the Mississippi Delta to fight segregation directly, consider him a deserter. That ultimate black separatist —an individual outside his community —Jonoah is plagued by guilty nightmares.

The last long section of the book is itself scattered and surreal, more obsession than narrative. For one thing, *all* of the characters are on the verge of disappearing. The evil Dog Whitlock, now a sheriff, is mentioned but not seen. Jubal Masterson, who has since become a Bob Moses-Meridian Hill self-abnegating organizer, may or may not be dead. Jonoah gropes his way back down the river, is hunted by murderous whites, and crosses a hallucinatory burnt and bombed landscape that is more like Vietnam than Mississippi. He finally reaches home, and a Masterson step-sister—but she has been blinded and can't see *him*.

In an important sense, neither *Meridian* nor *Jonoah and the Green Stone* are novels as we generally understand the term. It is impossible to know what Dumas might have made of his book if he had lived to complete it, but a reintegrated Jonoah—one able to stand with one foot in his community and one foot out—might conceivably have told a great Tolstoyan epic about his people in the 1960s. Or perhaps not. Alice Walker, who did finish her book, seems to suggest that epics are not what's called for. Epic novels require epic selves to write them, and it was away from mere selves that the Movement always meant to go.

REVIEWERS

FATHER JOHN L. MCKENZIE teaches theology at DePaul University in Chicago and is the author of *Light on the Gospels* (Thomas More).

GORDON BURNSIDE is a regular reviewer for the St. Louis *Post Dispatch*.

RONALD DE FEO writes for *The National Review*, *The Nation* and other journals.

FATHER GERARD S. SLOYAN is professor of religion at Temple University, Philadelphia.

JOHN DRUSKA is a writer who currently teaches high school in Indianapolis.

MSGR. GEORGE G. HIGGINS is Secretary for Research at the United States Catholic Conference in Washington.

The Decapitated Chicken and Other Stories

HORACIO QUIROGA

Trans. by Margaret Sayers Peden

U. of Texas Press, $8.95

RONALD DE FEO

If there is one virtue, aside from sheer technical skill, that is shared by many of the best contemporary Latin American writers it is an ability to bring to their narratives an element of strangeness, to handle even prosaic material in such a way that the ordinary is transformed into the extraordinary, that commonplace reality takes on a mysterious and a mythic quality. Even the work of such socially and politically conscious writers as Mario Vargas Llosa and Carlos Fuentes seems to transcend its realistic foundations. Horacio Quiroga, a short story writer who was born in Salto, Uruguay in 1878 and died in Buenos Aires in 1937, was one of those authors who pointed the way to today's Latin American fiction. His tales are perhaps not as sophisticated or as complex as many of the tales we read now, but their strangeness is just as prominent. And while it may be difficult to directly link Quiroga's work with that of any of today's writers (though we find a similar bluntness and compression in the stories of Dalton Trevisan and Juan Rulfo), his peculiar spirit is much in evidence.

Quiroga was, to say the least, a restless and troubled man, and his life, filled with deaths of various sorts, was as odd and tragic as were many of his tales. In fact, suicides and fatal accidents seemed to have haunted him throughout his life. His father, the Argentine consul to Uruguay, was fatally wounded as a result of a shotgun accident at a family gathering. Later, his seriously ill step-father shot himself to death. In 1902, Quiroga accidentally killed a best friend with a pistol. Years later, one of the frequent quarrels between Quiroga and his first wife about the upbringing of their two children prompted the young woman to take a fatal dose of poison. And in 1937, when the already severely depressed Quiroga learned that he was suffering from terminal cancer, he brought his suffering and his life to an abrupt, perhaps merciful, end by swallowing poison.

Quiroga spent most of his time in Argentina, living in Buenos Aires and making trips to San Ignacio (in the northern jungle province of Misiones) near which he had purchased some land. This primitive and exotic tropical region, with its strange animal and plant life, its struggling laborers and ruthless exploiters, its wide variety of human outcasts and misfits, obviously appealed to him greatly for he would repeatedly abandon urban existence and security to return for a time to the crude jungle cottage he had built with his own hands. Many of his stories, from those focusing on various animals and their struggle for survival to those centering on man against nature and on man against man, are set in this untamed region he knew so well. The harshness and brutality of jungle life, and the torment he experienced in his personal life are clearly reflected in his fiction. Even in *South American Jungle Tales* (now out of print in English), a collection of Kipling-like animal stories supposedly designed for children, there are graphic depictions of violence.

Many of the tales in *The Decapitated Chicken*, which presents some of his very finest work in a superbly designed volume, concentrate on various acts of revenge, struggles with nature

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

savage quirks of fate. Quiroga's style is perfectly suited to his subject matter. The crisp, unadorned language, the almost breathless pace of the narrative, match the tenseness of events. In part, the strangeness of the tales can be attributed to both this laconic quality and a narrow, intense focus. All extraneous matter is eliminated. Thoughts flash by. Sensations, emotions and conflicts are heightened. "The Dead Man" begins with the protagonist accidentally falling on the machete he has been using to cut bananas in a grove. The rest of this brief, unsettling tale relates the thoughts going through the man's mind as he dies. Here, by concentrating on those few remaining minutes before the inescapable end, Quiroga makes them as important for us as they are for the victim. The man is unable to believe what has happened, unable to accept such a tragedy occurring on his land, on a peaceful, ordinary day. Death is simply an absurd intruder. In "Drifting," Quiroga again records the thoughts of a dying man. This time the protagonist is the victim of an attack by a poisonous snake. Unable to accept his fate, he climbs into a canoe and drifts down the Paraná River, all the while trying to convince himself that he will survive the fatal bite. Here the time scheme is more extended than that of "The Dead Man," but the intensity and terror are just as strong.

Most of the stories in this volume end in death. Sometimes the deaths are described at length, as those in the two tales mentioned and in "Sunstroke," another story about an absurd tragedy. At other times, they are related briefly or merely hinted at, but are no less frightening or haunting because of the comparatively abrupt treatment. In the symbolic horror story, "The Yellow Pillow," we only discover the cause of the young bride's mysterious illness and death at the very end of the tale: a monstrous, parasitic animal, lodged in her pillow, has been draining her blood. Throughout "The Son" we are made to wonder along with the protagonist whither his young ting oneself go into the inconceivable and not surprisingly, on fatal accidents, son has met with death in the woods. In "The Decapitated Chicken," one of Quiroga's most brutal tales of revenge, the author cuts away from a murder before it is completed, but a father's cry upon discovering the body of his daughter is enough to convey the horror and savagery of the act.

Quiroga has often been compared with Poe and did, in fact, acknowledge him as one of his masters. Yet Poe, though certainly no less obsessed and morbid than Quiroga, is a more ornate, introspective and cerebral writer. By comparision, Quiroga sometimes seems simple and blunt and too anecdotal. But like Poe, Quiroga has the ability to thrust the reader into the heart of a story and hold him there. His superb craftsmanship and lively powers of invention are especially in evidence in "Anaconda," in which he effortlessly and convincingly tells the story of a snake community and human intruders from the snakes' point of view. Like the best of Quiroga's tales it seems as unusual, imaginative and alive as the work being produced by fellow Latin Americans today.

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

IN BRIEF

CHRISTIAN AT THE CROSSROADS, *Karl Rahner, Seabury, $5.95.*

This complex book is of specific worth. While its prose tires the mind because the writer has long since given up on the hard work of style, the effort of reading these literally tortured brief talks can be rewarding. The readers most rewarded may be those who have given up on faith and theology. Rahner writes of the Christian Easter message: "I do not intend to speak of it in a way acceptable to all; that would be to say nothing of value." He manages to say numerous things of value before he is finished. Among them are his previously expressed view that the essence of being human is unfulfilled transcendentality; that God is inconceivable to us and if we think he is not we do not know him; that faith is the act of letmystery. The book is radically skeptical in its admission of all that cannot be known in the religious realm.

The author is a priest of the Roman church who can state that "the Church proclaims a message which always calls its empirical reality into question. . . . The sole hope of doing one's bit to remedy the Church's wretchedness lies in bearing the burden of its misery, of which each member is to some extent . . . guilty." Rahner thinks that the Church must make its love for others

Classified

RATES: 60c a word, one time; 57c, three times; 54c, seven times; 51c, thirteen times. Twelve words *minimum. For box numbers add 50c per insertion.* Classified payable with order; monthly in advance for more than three times. COMMONWEAL, 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.

Chol-Chol Foundation

A TEAM OF FIVE is working to build up a rural community of poor Chileans and Mapuche Indians some 500 miles south of Santiago. The objective there is "to develop the human dignity of the person—materially, physically and spiritually . . . The land is rich," but hoes, plows rakes and seeds are needed. The Foundation aims to establish an adequate credit program for the purchase of these essentials. Checks should be sent to THE CHOL-CHOL FOUNDATION, FRIENDSHIP STATION, Washington, D.C. 20016.

Institutes

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Ninth Annual Institute, August 7-12, 1977. Revs. B. M. Ahern, Richard Clifford, Robert Karris. Write Sister Marianna, COLLEGE MISERICORDIA, Dallas, Pennsylvania 18612.

BIBLICAL INSTITUTE, Trinity College, Burlington, Vermont 05401. June 19-24. Brown, Collins, MacKenzie, Mowry, Pritchard. Pre-registration necessary. Write: Director.

Dignity

DIGNITY, an organization of gay and concerned Catholics, working for a more informed theology and pastoral approach to sexuality. Write: DIGNITY, 755 Boylston St., Room 413, Boston, Mass. 02116.

Positions Open

TEACHER OPENINGS, all fields, levels, locations; also credentials service. Write: NCPS, 334 W. Beardsley Ave., Elkhart, Ind. 46514.

Religious Education

REQUIRE MINISTER for religious education. Lay or religious. For progressive, growing parish, Reston, Va. Experience required, salary negotiable. Replies: M. McMahon, Rte. 2, Box 200-I, Sterling, Va. 22170, or call: 703—430-9357.

High School Principal

NEEDED: PRINCIPAL for Catholic secondary school. 1,700 students. Diocesan. Co-educational. Religious and lay faculty. School 8 years old. Flex schedule. Religious or lay may apply. Masters degree, administrative courses, and experience as high school teacher required. Must also have experience in a secondary administrative post. Send complete resume and references to: SEARCH COMMITTEE, St. Mark's High School, Henderson Rd., Wilmington, Del. 19808.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

credible by its socio-political and socio-critical commitment.

There is no way to demonstrate the dogmas of Christian faith, hence the author does not try. He asserts them and then reflects on their implications on the assumption that they are true. The technique is bound to put off the mentality used to demonstration until it sees that surrender is at work and not a "well-tempered synthesis of all of life's disparate insights." The book has some good things to say on faith, on truth, on prayer, on death. The translator's skill (V. Green) has resulted in some splendid aphorisms. One should serve: "We can cope with the incomprehensibilities of life only if we do not try to master them with that philistine foolishness which often passes for brave lucid wisdom."

GERARD S. SLOYAN

A CERTAIN MAN *by Zane Kotker, Knopf, $8.95.*

As much as its hero, perhaps because of him, Zane Kotker's *A Certain Man* wavers between preciosity and the practice of revelation. Soap-operatic chords sound through the book: a brief, coyly prophetic flash-forward after the Judea High Class of '21 defaces Red Rock with its signature, or the hero Arley's cliché-ridden vision of his shining pastoral goal. But through the novel, too, Kotker achieves passages that create the aura of Arley's ingenuous character, and make him genuinely likable. One occurs when the eleven-year-old Arley, story collector and judge-undertaker's son growing into a storytelling minister, receives a diary for Christmas: "Words would hold time forever. But since written words belonged to God, he would have to be careful. Nothing selfish could be put down, nothing angry. The diary would have to be like an Indian's knotted string, tied to remind only him of what unspoken things were meant." Another is the scene of Arley's ecumenical triumph during a summer assignment from seminary.

Unlike Kotker's first novel, *Bodies in Motion,* where we're able to penetrate, through minute details in a limited temporal scope, the psycho-spatial world of Sonya's exhausting daily trivia, *Man* calendars years of quickly-eclipsed episodes that shape Arley's life, an emblematic chronology that moves us but a hurried life, especially through its last decade, that leaves much undeveloped and us often at a distance from its actors. And because we come to like Arley, despite his scrupulous excesses, we expect more of *Man*—whether or not the book's elliptical surface is Kotker's attempt to find a narrative match for Arley's self-effacing life style.

At least Kotker does convince us that what a friend writes to Arley near *Man*'s end is, as well, her book's welcome revelation of the man: " 'If unselfishness is the core of religion—and I believe it is—then your whole life expresses it and stands as a testimony to it. You are not a national great man, but you are a very humble person. . .' "

JOHN DRUSKA

CITIZEN OF NO MEAN CITY: ARCHBISHOP PATRICK RIORDAN OF SAN FRANCISCO, *By James P. Gaffey, Consortium Books, Wilmington, NC. $15.*

Father Gaffey, who is currently researching the life of the late Bishop Francis C. Kelley, founder of the Catholic Church Extension Society, is a professionally trained historian in the tradition of his mentor, John Tracy Ellis. Some are of the opinion that the kind of biographical and institutional Church history that he and Ellis have specialized in is of limited value and ought to be replaced by in-depth studies of the Catholic collectivity in this country and its various ethnic strains. Surely we need more of the latter, but why can't we continue to have the former as well? This is by way of saying that I, for one, learned much about American Catholicism by reading Gaffey's carefully researched biography of Archbishop Patrick Riordan who, in addition to his low-key but effective administration of the Archdiocese of San Francisco before and after the disastrous earthquake of 1906, played a significant role in national and international ecclesiastical affairs as a behind-the-scenes member of the Gibbons-Ireland-Spalding team of liberal U.S. churchmen. I hate to quibble about an otherwise excellent study, but the publisher and his myopic proof reader ought to be ashamed of themselves for letting so many typographical errors find their way into the text.

GEORGE G. HIGGINS

CORRESPONDENCE

(*Continued from page 259*)

with the Nixon administration's activities in Cambodia and Chile. As for Vietnam, Sorensen was increasingly active from 1966 onward as a dove, serving as an adviser to Robert Kennedy's pro-peace candidacy in 1968 and as a leading supporter of the peace plank at the 1968 Democratic Convention.

Returning to the Kennedy administration, we should recall that it was Sorensen who drafted the American University speech in June, 1963, leading to the Limited Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and to the first major sale of grain to the Soviet Union in September, 1963.

Sorensen was bitterly opposed as CIA director by certain hawkish elements precisely because he is a liberal and a man of peace. His intellectual brilliance, energy, and industry would have made him an alert and effective CIA director.

WILLIAM V. SHANNON

Personhood Books

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: Oh my! Oh my goodness! Books for Brotherhood [Mar. 4]. A good idea, but limited. When can we expect an acknowledgment of 51 percent of the human race? At least twelve of the books advertised in the March 4 issue were written by women; at least twelve of them focus strongly on women.

Maybe we could slip in a good word for sisterhood?

MAGGIE FISHER, RSCJ
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF
WOMEN RELIGIOUS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Did You Miss . . .

- *Is College Worthwhile?* by Maurice Berube and Robert Gorham Davis
- *The Immoralists*, by Frank Getlein
- *New Chance for the Bishops*, by Peter Steinfels
- *Back to the Cold War*, by Thomas Powers
- *Timely Saints*, by Abigail McCarthy
- *Women in the Church*, by Francine Cardman, Lois Spear and Michael Novak
- *The United States and Southern Africa*, by Peter Walshe
- *New Anglican/R.C. Agreement*, by Peter Hebblethwaite
- *Is a Catholic University Still Possible?* by Richard P. McBrien George Pickering and the Editors
- *Transformation in Cambodia*, by David P. Chandler
- *Heed for the Poor Nations*, by Brennon Jones

. . . in recent issues of COMMONWEAL?

SEND FOR A HALF-PRICE TRIAL SUBSCRIPTION

11 issues (five months) for $4

FOR NEW SUBSCRIBERS ONLY

COMMONWEAL, 232 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y. 10016

Please send the next eleven issues of COMMONWEAL to:

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ **State**_____ **Zip Code**_____

☐ **I prefer a full year's subscription at $17**

4/29/77

412

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED